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A HISTORY OF THE  
BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE







*Photo: Lewis & Randall*

THE BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE

A HISTORY OF THE  
BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY  
THEATRE

BY BACHE MATTHEWS

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THIS little book is the outcome of a request made by Mr. Barry V. Jackson early this year that I would write a history of his theatre.

I have to thank Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. John Drinkwater, and other gentlemen for their contributions to the last chapter, and Mr. P. T. Creswell for much valuable help and advice.

B. M.



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## INTRODUCTION

By BARRY V. JACKSON, M.A.

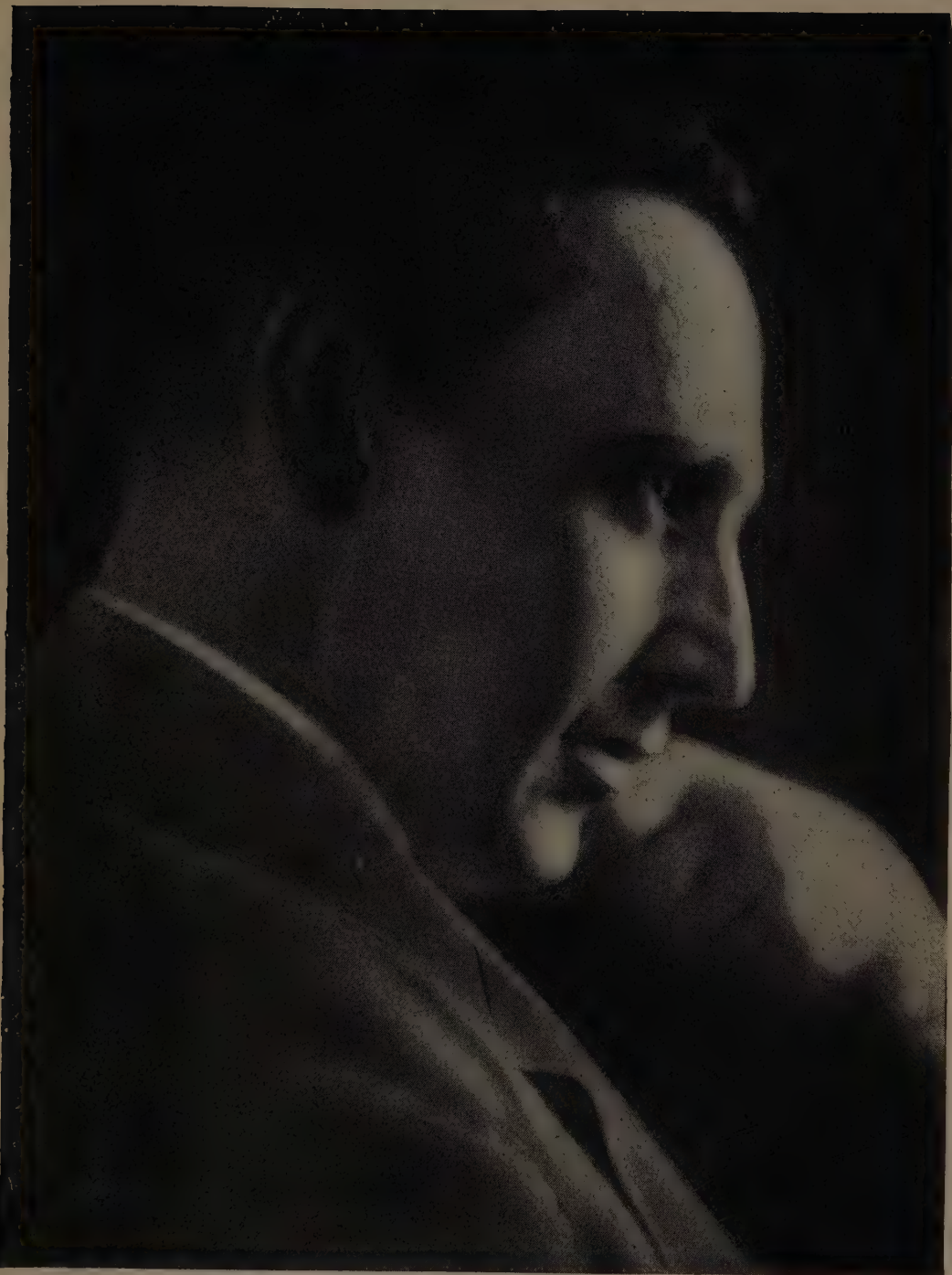
**A**N introduction usually falls into the category of explanation or apology. A wise writer uses the former, aware that by doing so he fulfils the function of the latter. Further exposition of this point is needless, Touchstone having epitomized it once for all with no better excuse than a gaining of time for Rosalind to don her farthingale and ruff. If every quick change of costume inspired such words of wisdom, civilization would be the richer. I tender the suggestion in all humility to the writers of Revues.

No history needs apology, and the following pages purport to be no more than a chronicle of events set down before they are lost in the limbo of Time. Chapter VI consists of articles by various authors, for the rule of life that no single individual can arrive at complete fulfilment alone is intensified in anything connected with the drama, the reflected essence of life. This chapter is from the pens of onlookers—Mr. Bernard Shaw knows the spirit which animates the Birmingham Repertory Theatre not only from the auditorium but also from the wings. Mr. Drinkwater was more than a moving force at the theatre's

inception and governed its fortunes in stormy days ; dissociated from the movement, the mental and physical strain of a creative theatre, he too has become an onlooker. Then there is a section written from the point of view of the audience in the balcony and another from the stalls, and an article by the architect, Mr. S. N. Cooke. The ideas flowing from these various pens focused on one object from different angles should prove illuminating.

Of the why and wherefore of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, it is impossible to say much. In the world of art things happen, and that is the beginning and the end. To reason is mere waste of time. Even the scientific mind which nowadays probes everything, avoids the subject, though it would seem most likely that the psychology of an audience would prove as fascinating as a duck-pond, an ant-heap, or an astral body of unutterable remoteness. The little theatre in question may owe its rise to the pent-up need for dramatic expression which is apparently common to all the human race and to every human being, as possibly in a far greater way Shakespeare and his age were the miraculous blossoming of desolate centuries preceding.

We English are relentless and untiring in pursuit of anything save art. It would seem that the only picture with which we have near acquaintance is Noel Paton's 'Pursuit of Pleasure.' Daily bread, a ball, though it be but a bundle of rag, or a wild animal



BARRY V. JACKSON  
*Founder and Director of*  
THE BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE



to pursue—the satisfaction is complete. Possibly by these latter means our dramatic instinct expresses itself. The football arena is akin to the gladiatorial combats of ancient Rome minus the blood and colour ; a fox-hunt is no more than a mimic representation of primitive man seeking food, and the mental energy and physical force used in either is infinitely more than that required to follow a performance of *Macbeth* or *The School for Scandal*. And we are curiously sympathetic to intellectual ignorance. The farm or factory hand who asked (were such question believable) if the fences on the Derby course were as big as those on the Grand National would be driven to live in Tibet or some far-away country, for ridicule would certainly drive him from his own. On the other hand, the lady who inquires if the Shaw cycle *Methuselah* is a music hall turn, is enlightened with the utmost tact and respect. On being seriously asked if *She Stoops to Conquer* is so tragic as *The Death of Tintagiles*, what and how does one answer ? No, though we have much drama in us, it certainly does not show itself in the form of vital interest in the theatre. The fact is that no mass of people will ever take initiative in raising its aesthetic standard, but rather the reverse. Any effort to achieve improvement is doomed at the outset so long as it is not fostered by the governing body. No public library, no public picture gallery, could exist under such conditions. So long as our theatres are organized to show a handsome profit, in other words,

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to depend on the taste of the masses, they will sink further and further from the ideal.

The Birmingham Repertory Theatre took its rise as an effort to enlarge and increase the aesthetic sense of the public in the theatre, to give living authors an opportunity of seeing their works performed, and to learn something from revivals of classics ; in short, to serve an art instead of making that art serve a commercial purpose. Generally speaking, the English public and the English authors are entirely dependent on the West End of London, where there is no theatre that can show during the last ten or fifteen years such an inspiring list of plays as the Stockport Garrick Society. Were their façades capable of raising a blush it would be concealed by the grime, which is only too apparent, in the mean and dingy streets in which they exist. To claim that the many interesting productions scattered about the vast wilderness of London in the course of a year prove anything to the contrary is a fallacy. It would be quite possible to spend a year of theatre-going in London which would satisfy an ogre in play-going, but everything else in life would have to be entirely sacrificed to finding out when and where the performances took place. Unless our English authors are successful in obtaining a production of their work in the West End, they will receive no production at all. If a German author is refused production in Berlin there are at least twenty other cities where he may receive the encouragement which is his due.

The Birmingham Repertory Theatre set out in 1913 to do what it could to help part of the English public, its authors, and its artists to realize a higher ideal than a satisfactory commercial balance-sheet, a very severe handicap among folk who deny the value of anything save £.s.d. Art has no possible relation to money ; the spiritual cannot be estimated by the material. Even as this is being written there are individuals who object to subscribing for seats during the proposed autumn season in Birmingham, in one case because the plays chosen have small casts (according to this reasoning *Twelfth Night* should be the most rarely performed play of Shakespeare's works), the other because one or more new works are to be included. This would seem to intimate that the spirit of adventure, the heritage of our country, does not exist where the drama is concerned. Is this because the public knows full well that it will always be provided with the theatre it asks for and not with that which it ought to have ?

Anyhow, the subject will bear no further discussion. It has been reiterated and proved times without number that as a people we do not take kindly to serious play-going, and times without number spasmodic and desultory efforts have been made towards a renaissance. If among these efforts the theatre to which these pages are devoted finds a small niche, its work will not have been altogether without honour.



## CHAPTER I

### ‘THE PILGRIM PLAYERS’

**I**T all sprang from private theatricals at The Grange. They were common events there. Christmas, birthdays, and all sorts of other celebrations were marked by dramatic performances organized by the youngest member of the household—Barry V. Jackson. His future work for the drama had been germinating even earlier, when he was playing with toy theatres and dreaming over the pictures in an illustrated Shakespeare. He was born with a sense of the theatre and knew the stories of Shakespeare’s plays before he could read. One of his childhood’s games was to recite ‘Double, double toil and trouble,’ marching round an old arm-chair.

While still a boy he read plays omnivorously. He hunted the bookshops for all manner of strange and out-of-the-way drama. Lack of translations did not stand in the way of his study of foreign examples, and he attacked Italian for the sole purpose of reading Goldoni. All this has since been of great value to him in his work for the theatre, as have also his attainments in music and architecture.

His ardour naturally drew round him other young

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people of similar tastes, and when dramatic enthusiasts meet, amateur performances are the almost inevitable result. At first Jackson wrote plays himself, but after a few years he abandoned this practice, as he did not consider his work of sufficient merit. All that he then wrote he has unfortunately since destroyed, so that we cannot judge of its value. The same fate has overtaken most of the programmes and other records of the private performances, but a few have been preserved. Two are of special interest. In the programme of Foote's neglected comedy, *The Liar*, played at The Grange at Christmas 1903, Miss Cicely Byrne (a niece of Jackson's) appears as 'The Chambermaid.' This delightful actress was only a child at the time, and was then starting on a career in which she has since become distinguished. In the other programme (*Twelfth Night*, July 1904) the names of John Drinkwater and Barry Jackson are bracketed together as 'Fabian and Feste, Servants to Olivia.' The two men were to remain closely associated for fourteen years as servants of the drama, and still continue their faithful service to their mistress, though no longer in double harness.

In the course of his reading Jackson had, in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, come across *The Interlude of Youth*, and he at once recognised its dramatic force. He and his friends rehearsed it and gave a private performance at The Grange in the autumn of 1907. The cast was :



Photo: Lewis & Randall

### THE DINING ROOM AT "THE GRANGE"

*The first performance by the Pilgrim Players, "The Interlude of Youth," was given in this room.*



Youth . . .	Herbert Stowell Milligan.
Charity . . .	John Drinkwater.
Riot . . .	Barry V. Jackson.
Pride . . .	Thomas J. Kennedy.
Humility . . .	Mrs. John Drinkwater (Miss Cathleen Orford).
Luxury . . .	Miss Louise de Lacy.

The small audience that had been invited included the Rev. Arnold Pinchard, at that time vicar of St. Jude's Church. Mr. Pinchard had previously arranged the visit to Birmingham of Mr. William Poel's production of *Everyman*, and his interest in all that is best in the drama is well known. He was impressed by the sincerity of the work of this party of unknown players, and invited them to give a public performance of *The Interlude* at St. Jude's Mission Hall.

This performance was given on 2nd October 1907. Great preparations, including further rehearsals, were made. There were certain additions to the cast : 'Luxury' was provided with two attendants, of whom Miss Cicely Byrne was one ; 'Riot' also had attendants, among whom were Mr. Frank Titterton and Mr. Walter Badham, both afterwards members of 'The Pilgrim Players.' The choir of St. Jude's Church, and acolytes with censers and tapers, added to the impressiveness of the performance. There was a small orchestra, under the direction of the Rev. Lester Pinchard ; one of its violinists was a boy of about fourteen years, Harold Mills by name, who

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from its institution has been the conductor of the Repertory Theatre orchestra. On the next day the following article appeared in the *Birmingham Post* :

##### THE INTERLUDE OF YOUTH.

##### PRODUCTION OF A MORALITY PLAY IN BIRMINGHAM.

Students of the drama who remember the production of *Everyman* in Birmingham some time ago will be interested in the revival of another morality play which was given last night for the first time in the Mission Hall, Inge Street, by a company of amateurs under the direction of Mr. Barry Jackson and the Rev. Arnold Pinchard.

Of the performance one is pleased to speak in terms of the highest praise. The staging was marked by severe simplicity, and the incidental music, which comprised Arcadelt's 'Ave Maria,' songs, processional hymns, and choruses by an invisible choir, was an invaluable adjunct in helping one to get into the spirit of the morality, and understand how the Catholic Church used the stage to enforce spiritual truths. The play was given by a body of amateurs, who elect to conceal their identity so that one cannot praise them personally. Each acquitted himself or herself with credit. The burden of the play fell upon the personators of 'Charity,' 'Youth,' 'Riot,' and 'Humility,' the first-named of whom delivered his lines with a dignity and power that would have done justice to a professional histrion. . . .

From other notices I add the following brief extracts :

The cast itself deserves the highest credit. It needs a severe mental wrench for us to get into sympathy with

the Mediaeval spirit, and so the actors and actresses had a difficult task. But they succeeded admirably, and save here and there the play was a fine bit of Mediaevalism. Mr. Barry Jackson and Father Pinchard deserve high praise for their artistic and effective arrangement. The opening, with the religious procession, the singing of the 'Ave Maria,' and the incense, struck the right note immediately. Then the commencement of the play, with 'Charity,' the first character to appear, and the close, with 'Charity' again alone on the stage, was finely dramatic. The performance is to be repeated, and it certainly deserves success.

(R. A. C. in the *Birmingham Despatch*.)

It would be entirely out of place to apply the ordinary standards of dramatic criticism to this charming morality. The lines are quaint and crude, the metre irregular, and the sentiments ingenuous in the extreme. But the total effect is impressive, and it does not lack a certain humour as a foil to the 'pale cast of melancholy' diffused by 'Charity' and his sister 'Humility.' We may say that the lines were delivered clearly, and with an appreciation of their meaning; wherever liveliness and spirit were requisite they were forthcoming. There was practically no 'staginess' about the dramatis personae, but an ease of deportment and expression remarkable under the circumstances. The selected music was sung with feeling, and altogether one felt that the good influences which are supposed to emanate from such a dramatic performance fell on fruitful soil.

(*Birmingham Daily Mail*.)

A few days after this performance I was dining with the Birmingham Dramatic and Literary Club,

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of which I was at that time a member, and overheard part of the conversation of two young men sitting near me. I did not know either of them, except by sight, but as they were talking of old plays, a subject that interested me, I made bold to join in. Mention was made of this recent performance of *Youth*, in which, as it transpired afterwards, they had both taken part, and, hearing that the play was to be repeated, I decided to take the opportunity of seeing it. On the Saturday of the following week I sought out St. Jude's Mission Hall. It was not a prepossessing place, the whitewashed walls being of the usual dingy kind. The stage setting, on an open platform, was exceedingly simple, consisting of bright green curtains hung in a semi-circle. In this semi-circle there were three openings, one in the centre and one on either side. Above each opening was a panel of brown board which bore, in clear shapely letters, the name of the place to which it was supposed to lead : 'The World,' 'The Citie of Blyss,' 'The Tavern.' The hall, so far as I remember, was about half full, the audience being mainly women, who probably were more interested in the mission hall than in *The Interlude of Youth*. However, they behaved with becoming reverence, and obeyed the request printed on the programme, to abstain from applause.

After a short address on the Religious Drama the performance began with a chant by an unseen choir ; then all the players, led by acolytes swinging censers

and carrying tapers, entered in procession and walked slowly round the stage. This was left empty for a moment, and then the play began. As it progressed, it became evident that here was that which was quite different from anything I had previously seen. The verse was spoken clearly and with conviction ; no unnecessary gestures were used, and there was none of the fidgetiness that is frequently so irritating in the performances of amateur actors. The whole presentation was stamped with dignity and sincerity ; much of it had the solemnity of a religious ceremonial. So far as I know, none of the actors had any interest in the play’s religious significance, yet the earnestness with which they presented it brought that significance into prominence.

About six weeks later one of the unknown young men who had joined in conversation with me at the Club called upon me at my office. He was about twenty-five, tall and slight, with black hair and pale, clear-cut face. He was unusually attractive, both in appearance and manner. We talked for a time of *The Interlude of Youth*, and he was delighted to hear how greatly I had been impressed by it. He then told me that on the previous evening the little group of actors who had presented it had decided to continue their activities under the name of ‘The Pilgrim Players.’<sup>1</sup> He added that a few more members were

<sup>1</sup> This name had no special significance. It was one of a number suggested in conversation, and probably alliteration had some influence in its selection.

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needed, and asked me to join. As I had never engaged in 'amateur theatricals' I felt more than a little diffident of my ability, but the visitor overcame my reluctance, remarking that experience in acting was of less importance than a serious interest in good drama. That same evening, therefore, I went along with him to a rehearsal of *Eager Heart*, in the St. Jude's Mission Hall. Some of 'The Pilgrims' had already arrived; to them I was introduced—Mr. Barry Jackson—Miss Cicely Byrne—'my wife, Mrs. Drinkwater.' Then for the first time I learned who my new friend was. His name was already familiar to me as the author of a recently published volume of poetry.<sup>1</sup>

Other 'Pilgrims' arrived later, Thomas J. Kennedy, J. S. Milligan, T. Foden Flint, James Holt, and Miss Ebbsworth. Miss Margaret Chatwin, who was also playing in Miss Buckton's Christmas Mystery, was unavoidably absent. A copy of the play was handed to me and I was asked to read 'First Shepherd.' We went through the play, fixing every movement, every gesture, and every inflexion. Jackson was the producer for that night, although he was playing a part, but the Rev. Arnold Pinchard assisted at some of the later rehearsals.

The costumes for this play, as had been those for *Youth*, were designed by Barry Jackson; in fact, for all the plays produced by 'The Pilgrims,' both dresses and stage decoration were invariably designed by him.

<sup>1</sup> *The Death of Leander and Other Poems* (Birmingham, 1906).

For *Eager Heart*, a dramatization of the Nativity story, the style of dresses was suggested by Burne-Jones's picture 'The Star of Bethlehem,' in the Birmingham Art Gallery. Again the stage was hung with curtains, this time blue. Four performances were given during Christmas week 1907. The *Birmingham Daily Post* stated that 'the mediaeval atmosphere of the Nativity play was fully realised,' and the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* described it as 'excellently played.' Barry Jackson, John Drinkwater, and Frank Moore (who is still a member of the Repertory Company) were the three 'Kings'; 'Eager Heart' was played by Miss Cicely Byrne, and 'Eager Fame' by Miss Margaret Chatwin. The cast also included T. Foden Flint, afterwards for a time Stage Manager of the Repertory Theatre.

The choice of our first two plays, and the name that had been given to our little band, suggested to many that we were a religious organization. Our later work, of course, showed this to be a mistake, but many worthy people in the town found it difficult to believe that we were not missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church, engaged in insidious propaganda. The sacred music, the incense, the tapers and ecclesiastical vestments used in the performances had presumably given some grounds for the misapprehension. Names of actors did not appear, the hall used was connected with a church, and the programmes contained a request that there should be no applause. In *Eager*

*Heart* we even went so far as to print on the back of the programme the hymn 'Christians, Awake,' 'to be sung at the close by all, standing.' Everything possible was done to create a church-like atmosphere. But it was all done in the service of the Drama, not of the Church. It so happened that the two plays which had been performed had as their aim an appeal to the religious sense, and as actors, we had to heighten that appeal by every method in our power. In this we were, I think, not altogether unsuccessful, for the audience would file out silently or talking only in whispers, as at the end of a church service.

Whatever may have been the influence of these performances on the public, I believe that they had a valuable and lasting effect on the players. They gave a serious significance to all our subsequent work, and impressed upon us, as probably no other kind of play could have done, the value of sincerity in the art we were beginning to practise. We were all intensely in earnest, and these first plays became for us a kind of dedication of ourselves to the work we had undertaken.

A few days before the production of *Eager Heart* we issued through the local press our first statement of our aims.

It will be remembered that in October last a series of performances of the old English morality play, *The Interlude of Youth*, was given in Birmingham, and the success with which the experiment met has led to interest-



*Photo: Geo. Dawson*

ST. JUDE'S MISSION HALL

WHERE THE EARLY PERFORMANCES BY THE "PILGRIM PLAYERS"  
WERE GIVEN



ing developments. For some time past there has been a tendency on the part of the large provincial towns to express themselves, rather than accept the London theatre as the sole arbiter and source of supply in dramatic matters, and the movement cannot but be regarded as a healthy one. Dublin has made a distinct and valuable contribution to the modern stage with its National Irish Theatre, Manchester has acquired a reputation by its annual Shakespearean productions, and Glasgow is gradually making for itself an individual position in the field of dramatic enterprise. This being so, it is gratifying to know that in Birmingham also an effort is being made to achieve something in this direction. The persons responsible for the production above mentioned have now formed themselves into a society, under the name of ‘The Pilgrim Players,’ whose definite object it is to put before the Birmingham public such plays as cannot be seen in the ordinary way at the theatres. Their attention will, for the most part, be confined to old English plays, but considerable catholicity will be observed in the matter of selection. There is, of course, much in our dramatic literature that cannot be staged for the usual ‘run,’ on account of the expense and risk of serious loss, but of which one or two performances would be welcomed by such as appreciate its aesthetic and literary value. The society does not wish to more than cover outlay in the matter of financial return, and, intending as it does to as far as possible dispense with scenery, it hopes to be able to provide such performances, and so to supply a distinct want. The members are anxious to do this without any parade of their personal element, and this desire will be observed on their programmes, whereon will be given merely the characters

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represented. Considerable sympathy with the movement has already been evinced in influential quarters, notably the University Shakespeare Society, which is taking steps to interest its members in the productions of 'The Pilgrim Players,' who themselves are likely to give an annual Shakespearean performance for the said society, to whom they are affiliated.<sup>1</sup>

We did not keep the promise that 'our attention will, for the most part, be confined to old English plays,' as of the twenty-eight plays produced by 'The Pilgrim Players' only nine can be so described. The other undertakings were, I think, maintained—the production of plays little known, but of aesthetic and literary value, regardless of financial results (a course made possible by Barry Jackson's generosity), the simplifying of scenery, catholicity of selection, and the suppression of the personal element.

Our third venture, in the April of 1908, was *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, a play that has never been a favourite in the theatre. Meanwhile occasional private readings were given of dramas which we thought we might produce later. The readings and our rehearsals of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* were sometimes held at The Grange, but more often in the Mission Hall. During these same weeks the other necessary preparations for the production were on foot. The costumes, based on those in a fresco of the Marriage of the Virgin by Lorenzo de Viterbo, were

<sup>1</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, 16th December 1907.

made at The Grange, a sempstress being engaged for the purpose, and help was given by the lady ‘Pilgrims’ and others. The sewing was done in the billiard-room, which was always littered with half-made dresses and fragments of material. I don’t believe any one ever played billiards there : when it was not a workshop it was a studio, and on the settees were piled drawing boards, portfolios, and studies in various stages of completion.

Even this room, large as it is, proved too small for the painting of the curtains with which the stage was to be draped. Work on these had to be done in the garden, whenever the weather was fine, where they hung on cords between two trees. Six curtains, each 28 feet by 16 feet, were prepared. They were made of ordinary scenic canvas and on each was a different design copied from the pictures by Carpaccio illustrating the legend of St. Ursula. The designs were drawn on them by Jackson, who also did the greater part of the painting, though we all of us lent a hand at filling in the colour. Sunday morning was the usual time for this work. No piece of scenery has ever been of so much service to us as this set of curtains : after sixteen years they are still in use at the Repertory Theatre. There has hardly been a single Shakespeare play produced by us in which they have not figured.

To prepare the public for this form of stage setting, Drinkwater wrote an article on ‘The Draped Stage’

which was printed in the *Birmingham Daily Mail* on 21st April 1908. The last two paragraphs contain the gist of his argument :

Briefly, to sum up then, the defence of the draped stage may be based on these lines : That scenery is always inadequate, generally grossly so ; that even where this is not the case it is not required to complete the picture, inasmuch as Shakespeare did not make it his business to present life photographically ; and that whenever information as to the background is essential to our understanding it is supplied in the poet's words.

It may possibly be urged that the logical outcome of this attitude would be to pay no attention to detail in costumes. I contend that if scenery is to be used it should be accurate and as true to nature as possible, but that it is not necessary at all, that it is indeed in many ways undesirable. As costumes, on the other hand, are necessary, let them be such as will blend with the play and be pleasing to our sense of colour and beauty.

*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was felt to be too important a play for the little hall in Inge Street, and a much more suitable home was found for us at the Edgbaston Assembly Rooms. The large hall is well suited for such performances as ours. It holds about 400 people. The stage, though small, is sufficient for plays with simple settings, and is lit by foot-lights and one top batten. Jackson removed the painted act-drop and had brown tableau-curtains fitted behind the proscenium ; a couple of arcs were added to the lighting arrangements. This



*Photo: Geo. Dawson*

# THE EDGBASTON ASSEMBLY ROOMS

THE HOME OF THE "PILGRIM PLAYERS" FROM 1908 TO 1912.



hall was our home until the Repertory Theatre was opened in 1913.

The draped stage certainly justified itself on this occasion. The bright colours of the graceful fifteenth-century Italian costumes contrasted gaily with the delicate shades of the curtains, painted in softer hues, to represent old tapestry, which entirely enclosed the back and sides of the stage. A flight of four white steps, half the width of the proscenium, occupied the centre of the back of the stage. These steps and two stools were the only furniture used. The only illumination came from the two arc lamps, one on each side, which flooded the centre of the stage with amber light. The pictorial effect was one of great beauty. No changes of scenery were made nor was the curtain lowered, the ends of scenes being indicated by short pauses, during which the stage was left empty. At each of the three performances given during the spring the play was preceded by an ‘Ode to Shakespeare’<sup>1</sup> specially written for the occasion by John Drinkwater, and spoken by Miss Chatwin. The elocution, and the intelligence of the production won approval, but the acting in many respects no doubt left much to be desired; we had a great deal to learn, and were probably no better than other earnest amateurs.

No more work was attempted during that season, and it was not until the following September that we met again, this time to rehearse Wilde’s *The Importance of*

<sup>1</sup> See *Lyrical and Other Poems*, 1908.

*Being Earnest*. We produced it in October, and it was both our first modern play and the first play for which we used scenery. A simple interior set was designed by Jackson and was made by a local scene-painter, who also provided a stock garden set, used for the second and third Acts. The third Act should be another interior, but we played it in the garden to avoid a change of scene, which on a small stage is always a difficulty. The performance, though interesting, was not, I think, specially noteworthy. The year finished with a Christmas performance of *Eager Heart*.

For two months in the spring of 1909 we temporarily forsook the Edgbaston Assembly Rooms. The large hall at Queen's College was much cheaper, but instead of a stage it had only a platform without proscenium or special lighting arrangements. On such a platform one cannot arrange scenery, and the presentation of modern plays was therefore very difficult; but we gave two performances of *The Interlude of Youth* and three of Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Scornful Lady*. This comedy was well worth rescuing from the oblivion into which it had fallen. It was given on an open stage with a background of green curtains sprinkled with yellow fleurs-de-lis. The *Birmingham Daily Post* said that 'the play suffered from the lack of stage accessories and illusions. Bare boards are not the best sauces for such old meat, and "The Pilgrims," although affecting such rigid sim-

plicity, would find the artistic interest of their productions added to if they set them off with a little scenery.’ I think that in this case the critic was in error. Scenery would have necessitated changes and changes would have meant waits, and in curtains we played the comedy with only one interval. The method proved a distinct advantage in a play of this character. The performance was certainly a boisterously merry one and the audience appeared to enjoy it as much as the players did.

The success of the first few shows and the general chorus of praise raised by both newspapers and public lifted ‘The Pilgrim Players’ to a high position among the amateur societies of Birmingham. One interesting result of this was that many local amateurs became desirous of being invited to join us. This made it possible for us to select from among them those most suitable for any particular play which we had in mind, and it also made possible much stricter discipline than usually exists among amateurs. If an actor was slack or in any way unsatisfactory, he could not, like his professional brothers, be discharged, but he could be, and was, left out of any further productions. The very loose constitution of the society aided this course. Strictly speaking, there was no society, as the group had no constitution, no rules, no subscription, and no committee. It consisted of Barry Jackson, Manager, John Drinkwater, Secretary, J. S. Milligan, Treasurer, Arnold Pinchard, friend and general adviser, and such

others as Jackson thought fit to invite to assist him in any particular production. The personnel of the group was therefore continually changing. Actually there were some half-dozen, besides those just mentioned, who played in nearly every performance, and they formed a sort of inner circle. Though there were no official meetings, these members would gather round the fire at The Grange on Sunday nights to talk about our work and plans for the future.

The usual Christmas revival of *Eager Heart* finished a rather slack year, but we made up for lost time in 1910, which was an unusually busy one. In January, Jackson called a meeting of all those who had been helping him up to that time. He told us of his hope that shortly we should be able to give a performance every week from October to May. In February our first original play was produced, Barry Jackson's *Fifnella*. It was not, strictly speaking, a 'Pilgrim' production, as the name of that society was not used in connection with it, but it was given under Jackson's direction at the Edgbaston Assembly Rooms and most of 'The Pilgrims' played in it; it may, therefore, reasonably be included with their work. *Fifnella* is described by its author as a 'fairy-frolic,' and is a good-humoured satire on the popular pantomime of the time. It opens with the usual Demon King, Fairy Queen, and so-called comic 'knock-about.' Two children from the audience protest against the form of entertainment and mount the

stage to prevent the performance from proceeding ; the stage manager, the fireman, and a policeman start to carry them off. They are rescued by the real fairies, who take them and all the pantomime people off to Fairyland, where they meet with various adventures. It is a charming little work, full of dialogue that is childlike rather than childish. A present-day revival of it is, however, unlikely, as it is somewhat out of date, pantomime having changed a good deal during the past fourteen years.

At the end of the same month a double bill was produced, consisting of Shaw's *Press Cuttings* and Yeats's *The King's Threshold*. *Press Cuttings* had been given as a private performance at The Grange during the previous October, and so needed little in the way of rehearsal ; nearly all the available time was devoted to Yeats's play.

Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* followed at the end of April. For this play Jackson arranged a very striking draped setting. Black curtains were hung along the back and sides of the stage, and in a semi-circle in front of them were five grey curtains, spaced at equal distances and each measuring about three feet across ; these latter, against their black background, suggested columns of grey stone.

By this time our work had become known outside the town and we received a number of invitations to give performances at other places. Twice in 1909 we visited Stratford-on-Avon ; in April we played

*The Interlude of Youth* at the Corn Exchange, and in December *The Scornful Lady* at the Memorial Hall. To other places near home we paid several visits—King's Heath, Henley-in-Arden, and Worcester. In June 1910 we were invited to appear at the Royal Court Theatre, London. Mr. W. B. Yeats had been present at our production of *The King's Threshold*; he now asked us to give three performances of it during the Irish National Theatre Society's season at that theatre. We accepted the invitation with great delight. At each performance our play was followed by *The Building Fund*, given by the Irish company. We enjoyed the experience, but were somewhat downcast because some of the London newspapers, having no sentimental interest in us, told us of our faults pretty clearly. However, some merits were recognized, and the criticism was probably such as we deserved.

During the season 1910-11 'The Pilgrims' gave thirty-five performances. To carry out so full a programme as this it was necessary for us to give to the work the whole of our available time. All the men except Jackson and Drinkwater were engaged in business, but we met every evening for rehearsals at the Assembly Rooms, the Mission Hall, or The Grange.

The season opened with *The Scornful Lady*, which was followed by Henley and Stevenson's *Admiral Guinea*, Rostand's *The Fantasticks*, *Eager Heart*, and

*Fifinella*. *Admiral Guinea* lacked grip. I think the truth is that we had not the necessary technique for a play of this kind. We could make a very good attempt at a poetic play or at a modern comedy, but I feel there is no question that in this particular instance we did certainly fail. In *The Fantasticks* we made up for our shortcomings in the previous play ; it was a really delightful production. It was charmingly dressed and staged, and the *Daily Post* critic said, ‘The performance was marked by many flashes of good and polished acting.’

With the programme of *The Fantasticks* was issued a circular appealing for further support for our efforts. Of this probably few copies are now in existence.

To their friends whose support has enabled them to carry out their programme for nearly four years, ‘The Pilgrim Players’ would take this opportunity of offering their warmest thanks, and at the same time of making a request.

We believe that our efforts have made an appeal to a small circle perhaps, but nevertheless an appeal of a definite and peculiar kind. The people who have taken a serious interest in our work have done so for no other reason than that they have found this work to their liking. They have, in short, not been merely indulging some personal acquaintance or satisfying some social engagement, but have of their own impulse bestowed their approval on an earnest artistic venture. Our greatest satisfaction, apart from the joy of the work itself, has been to see that many people, without any summons

other than their own inclination, have returned to our work again and again. To these friends it is that we make our appeal. By their constant support they have in a very literal sense identified themselves with the movement for which 'The Pilgrim Players' stand in Birmingham, and their interest is clearly as essential to the progress of this movement as is the work of 'The Players' themselves. Will they, we therefore ask, take it upon themselves to give their goodwill the added colour of some personal effort to widen our audience? It is now manifest that we all have the same interests at heart and the same end in view. 'The Players' will strive, to the best of their ability, to build up and strengthen their art upon the stage, and to realize yet more fully the seriousness of their undertaking. Will you, for your part, help in the no less important work of 'spreading the news'?

We had, at this time, collected round us a faithful audience, but it was lamentably small; very rarely was our hall half full, and only too often there were merely a handful present. The expense of running the plays was, of course, considerable, and the takings never covered the actual cost. The deficiency was made up out of Jackson's pocket, and though he was prepared to continue paying out quite cheerfully, it was felt that some effort must be made to increase the attendance. On the 24th November the Rev. Arnold Pinchard delivered a public lecture in the Midland Institute on the work of 'The Pilgrim Players.' In the course of this he stated that they

represented in Birmingham part of the movement towards better drama which was going on all over the country. They were anxious to continue the work on which they had started, but this would be possible only if they obtained greater support from the citizens of Birmingham. He expressed himself as confident that if ‘The Pilgrim Players’ could keep up their movement for four or five years they would succeed in developing a demand for simplicity in the drama.

In the same hall John Drinkwater spoke a fortnight later on the stage production of Shakespeare. His address was mainly a defence of the draped stage. He said that what was demanded from the theatre was that it should present to them, in the clearest possible manner, a pageant of ideas without distracting attention by anything that did not bear a direct relation to those ideas. The demand, however, was rarely satisfied, and instead they had scenery which only succeeded in exciting them by some extravagant display, supposed to be splendid, but in reality foolish, if not vulgar. For poetical drama the setting should be simple, unobtrusive, and innocent of any attempt at realism, and that setting, he urged, was to be obtained simply by the use of curtains, the selection of the material being always governed by the nature of the play. By the adoption of this arrangement, the attention of the audience would be centred upon the beauty of the play, and the inevitable result would be to raise the standard of dramatic art in all its aspects.

These two lectures were given under the auspices of 'The Pilgrim Players,' as was also a reading by Barry Jackson of Maeterlinck's then recently published *Mary Magdalene*, and they helped to bring the work of the society into public notice.

*Eager Heart* and *Fifinella* were revived at Christmas 1910, *Eager Heart* being played at St. Jude's Mission Hall on 21st and 22nd December; these were the last performances given by us in that hall. The need of a central office and rehearsal room had become more urgent with the increased activities of the autumn, and in the middle of December Jackson secured for our use a suite of rooms over 51 John Bright Street. It comprised, on the first floor, a large room which we used for rehearsals and office work, and a kitchen and other rooms for the caretaker, who was also our dress-maker; and on the second floor, another large room and a smaller one which were used as wardrobe and stores. From the beginning of the year 1911 to the end of April 'The Pilgrims' gave performances every Saturday evening; many of the plays performed were revivals, but we produced six entirely new ones. *Ser Taldo's Bride*, a one-act play by Jackson and Drinkwater, *Everyman*, W. W. Gibson's *The Garret*, Hankin's *Return of the Prodigal*, and Shakespeare's *King John*. *Ser Taldo's Bride* is a pleasant little play, originally written in prose by Jackson and turned into rhymed couplets by Drinkwater. It is a light and dainty trifle, set in sixteenth century Italy, its

theme being the impossibility of mating May and December. The elderly Professor, Ser Taldo, in love with the fair Fioretta, finds Simone, one of his students, studying Ovid's *Art of Love* with the desire of learning what love means. Ser Taldo tells the boy to put away his book and practise a few precepts which he gives him on the first pretty girl he meets. This happens to be Fioretta, who prefers the graceful youth to the old Professor. The curtain falls on Ser Taldo and one of his cronies seeking solace in friendship and wine.

Come, sit beside me in the sun and see  
The night come up along the valley, free  
From care of any morrows; that is best  
For two old fellows—warmth, a friendly jest,  
A flagon of good wine, a timely call  
To sleep betimes—you rogue, you 've drunk it all!  
Well, well, there 's more—ho, house there, house, I say!  
More wine, my girl. We 'll watch the world away.  
More wine, we 'll laugh, above the changing tide  
And keep a place for one—' Ser Taldo's bride.'

*Ser Taldo* plays for about half an hour only, and the remainder of the evening bill consisted of *Admiral Guinea*, of which the *Birmingham Post* critic wrote :

*Admiral Guinea*, while it remains on the whole a distinctly creditable presentation, remains also a presentation in which the absence of the hand of a good producer is very noticeable. In *Fifnella*, when some of the people of the play wanted to get from one region of Fairyland to another in a boat, the remark was made,

‘ We have wood, we have tacks, but we have no hammer.’ This often appears to be the case with ‘ The Pilgrim Players.’ They have wood, they have quite a number of tacks, but they need a hammer.

This paragraph forced upon our notice a fact of which we had for some time been conscious—the need, for certain types of plays, of a competent producer. Jackson, Drinkwater, and Pinchard were admirable directors of Elizabethan and other poetic plays, but they recognized that modern work and melodrama require quite different treatment, and that, at the time, they had not the experience necessary for the really successful production of plays of this kind. Jackson, therefore, had an interview with the critic, and with him discussed the procedure advisable with regard to such plays in the future. The critic was F. A. Besant Rice, son of the novelist, who had had considerable experience as a producer when acting as private secretary to Sir Arthur Pinero. The outcome of the interview was that Mr. Rice volunteered to produce a modern play for us. The play selected was Hankin’s *Return of the Prodigal*, which was presented in March 1911. The experiment justified itself, *The Return of the Prodigal* being the best of our modern productions up to that time. *Everyman*, our third morality play, was produced early in April.

The Shakespeare Festival of this year was on a bigger scale than on previous occasions. *The Two*

*Gentlemen of Verona*, *Measure for Measure*, and *King John* constituted a heavy undertaking. The first two were revivals, but none the less needed rehearsal, as they had not been played for twelve months. *King John* was new, and was the most ambitious of our attempts. For it, Jackson used a form of scenery that has been the basis of the stage decoration for nearly all our Shakespeare and eighteenth-century plays since—a fixed architectural setting with changing backgrounds.

For some time we had felt the need of some additional medium for the dissemination of our views on drama in particular, and on everything in general. In February of this year we issued the first number of *The Scallop-Shell*, ‘an occasional review, being the organ of “The Pilgrim Players,” edited by John Drinkwater and published by the Birmingham Printers Ltd.’ It was a quarto pamphlet of 32 pages, sold at sixpence. It contained articles by Drinkwater, Besant Rice, Arnold Pinchard, Rutland Boughton, and Miss A. E. F. Horniman, poems by Alfred Noyes and Oliver W. F. Lodge, a drawing by Barry Jackson, and three drawings by Christina Walshe. It was a very cheap sixpennyworth, even at that time, and sold well, and it has now become very scarce. The second and last part was published in the following April and contained, among other things, poems by W. W. Gibson and Helen Bantock, and drawings by Bernard Sleight and Evelyn Matthews. This part

did not sell so well—in fact it went so badly that no further numbers were issued.

After much correspondence and many interviews Drinkwater arranged for 'The Pilgrims' to give a series of pastoral performances in some of the villages round Birmingham during the summer of 1911. There were eight of us in the touring party, the Misses Chatwin, Orford and Pinchard, and Jackson, Drinkwater, Sunderland, Mason and myself. Our repertoire consisted of *The Interlude of Youth*, *Ser Taldo's Bride*, *The Mock Doctor* (Fielding), scenes from *Twelfth Night*, and scenes from *As You Like It*. We started off on Monday, the 26th June. Miss Orford, Miss Pinchard, Drinkwater and I travelled on bicycles; the remaining four, with the luggage, went in Jackson's car. We arrived at Aston Cantlow, Warwickshire, at mid-day and gave two performances, afternoon and evening, in the vicarage garden. On the succeeding days we played in the Memorial Theatre Gardens at Stratford-upon-Avon, in the public gardens at Droitwich, and at Studley, Chipping Campden, Sibford, Bourton-on-the-Hill, Barnt Green, Dudley, Malvern, Leamington, Northfield, and several other places. It was a delightful month. The weather was extremely hot during the first fortnight, so hot that the grease paint often melted as we were using it. Some of the performances were of special interest. At Bourton we played *The Interlude of Youth* in a beautiful old Gothic barn, as perfectly proportioned as any

church, where the ecclesiastical atmosphere of the morality was more successfully reproduced than anywhere else. At Campden we played on what was once the terrace of the Hall, the ruined walls of which formed an appropriate background. At each end of the terrace there still remains an old stone summer-house ; these two served us as dressing-rooms. We had a very happy week at that lovely Cotswold town, where we gave four performances. The audiences were not large, but they were enough to cover our expenses ; moreover, we made some delightful friendships there. On the last night of our stay we gave a supper at the hotel to some of the working people of the little town who had helped in various ways. It was a merry evening, but, alas, the weather was hot and the big meat pie which formed the most substantial part of the supper had, like ourselves, been affected by the heat. There were worried and whispered conferences behind the door. Those of us who knew the state of affairs decided to have food of a lighter kind. Others, after trying the pie, decided that they were not hungry, but most continued the meal in happy ignorance. We expected there would be a run on doctors the next day, but so far as we know, no ill effects followed. I suppose country digestions are stronger than we expected them to be.

For one day of our tour no performance had been fixed, and not wishing to spend a second day in Droitwich, we started off after the evening show for that

lovely Warwickshire village, Ombersley. During the evening meal at the hotel we discussed our intentions for the next day, and decided to try to arrange a performance at Holt Fleet, a few miles away, on the Severn. None of us knew anything about Holt Fleet, except that we had an impression that it was a holiday resort of some kind. We arrived there early on the Thursday morning and found that it consisted of a hotel on the river bank and a landing-stage. There was no village and apparently there were no people. At the hotel we were told that excursion steamers came up the river and landed holiday-makers in the field in which the hotel was situated. This sounded fairly promising, especially as arrangements for lunch and tea for a large party were in progress. Other parties might arrive. The hotel proprietor gave us permission to give performances in the field. The public, however, could not be shut out of the field, so some sort of enclosure was necessary. After some negotiation he consented to lend the canvas, poles and ropes of a large marquee, but was unable to supply the labour to erect it. Not wishing to admit defeat, we dragged the heavy material to one corner of the field and set to work erecting the tent ourselves. We started quite cheerfully, measured out the ground and proceeded to drive in the poles. None of us was accustomed to physical labour, and hammering tent poles into hard ground is not light work. The number of poles seemed endless. One after another we

dropped to the grass exhausted, but at last we got them up. By this time we had given up all idea of a tent, as we did not dare to think of a roof. All we now wanted was some sort of screen shutting off a section of the field, so that we could make a charge for admission. We proposed to hang the canvas on the poles and so make an enclosure. We hung it, and the whole thing collapsed. By this time we were in a state of mind to appreciate the feelings of the Hebrews when they sat down by the waters of Babylon and wept. We wanted to do the same by the waters of Severn. However, we got a certain number of the poles up again and with guy ropes and pegs made them reasonably secure. Then the canvas was hung round and we had our enclosure. A gipsy encampment would have been ashamed of it as a wind screen, but there was no help for it : we had neither the time nor the strength to rebuild, for as soon as it was finished it was time to dress. The ladies had laid out the costumes in a stable, divided into two parts by Jackson's car. The ladies dressed on the right, we on the left. When ready we walked down to our field expecting to find it full of visitors, but it was a howling wilderness. By and by the noise of an approaching steamer was heard, and we made final preparations. A handwritten placard announcing that 'The Pilgrim Players' of Birmingham would give performances was pinned up at the entrance to the enclosure. The play named on the announcement was *The Mock Doctor*—

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'Admission 3d., children 1d.' Forms and chairs borrowed from the hotel provided accommodation for about forty people. We hoped to give several performances at short intervals during the afternoon and early evening. The passengers filed off the boat, all working women—it was a church sewing society. They took no notice whatever of us or our painfully constructed theatre. In desperation we borrowed a dinner bell, and Mason, with the placard pinned on his chest and the bell in his hand, headed a procession of the remaining seven of us. Full of shame and determination we paraded the field, making a dreadful noise and calling upon all present to follow us. We reached the enclosure : our audience consisted of one lady, a friend from Birmingham, and three children ; total takings 6d. We gave the show. Those who were not on the stage (so called) at the moment kept outsiders from creeping under the canvas and pulling the whole construction down. When at last we got through the miserable business we dashed to the dressing stable, jumped into our clothes, and, all clinging on to the car, drove from the scene of our disgrace as quickly as possible, leaving everything just as it was. None of us has ever dared to visit the place since. Probably it is really a quite charming riverside, but we cannot believe it.

Sunday was spent at the British Camp Hotel near Malvern. While we were there Madame de Navarro (Miss Mary Anderson) visited the same hotel, and we

had the privilege of giving her a private performance of *Youth* on that evening. At the end of the first fortnight, two of us (I being one) had to return to our work, and our places were taken by others who had the necessary leisure ; my record of the second half of that summer tour is, therefore, incomplete. On one of the Saturday afternoons the company were playing at a garden party at a house near Dudley. I went over to appear in the evening performance, being unable to get there in time for the earlier one. On arriving I heard the alarming news that during the afternoon Drinkwater had had a sunstroke and the performance had been abandoned. When I reached his room I found him lying down and Mrs. Drinkwater bathing his forehead. My anxious inquiries were met with ‘Come in, and shut the door.’ When the door was closed the invalid and his wife got up and laughed. ‘I am quite all right—it was the only thing to do.’ Then I heard the story. In the afternoon one of the men playing an important part which he had not played before was found to know practically nothing of his lines. He stumbled on for a few minutes, gagging in blank verse in a most disconcerting manner. At last he could carry on no longer, so he beckoned to Drinkwater, who was standing at the side awaiting his cue, and shouted, ‘Come hither, brother—I must go hence.’ It is needless to say that this line was not in the play, nor should the actor have left the stage at that point. Drinkwater saw that the show

could not be picked up again, so he entered, staggered, put his hand to his head, and fell flat. There was a rush to pick him up. Doctors were called ; he was carried to the house, and the performance was cancelled. Those who saw it and who knew the facts say that it was one of the best bits of acting Drinkwater had ever done. Fortunately, he recovered in the evening, and we were able to give a different play. He was accorded a great reception, as all the audience regarded him as a hero for rising from a sick-bed to do his work. His action had indeed been heroic, but not in the way that was generally thought. I think that to this day very few of those present know that his 'faint' should have been spelt with an 'e.'

Our last season began late in September 1911. We had already begun to regard ourselves as, at any rate, semi-professional actors. We added to the description of 'The Pilgrim Players' a subsidiary title, 'The Birmingham Repertory Company' ; this was printed on our subsequent programmes and announcements. During the last year all the actors were paid small salaries for their services—a serious addition to the running expenses, but Jackson felt that he could not continue to make such heavy demands on his Company's time without their receiving some remuneration. Really we all enjoyed the work, and would have carried on gladly without this additional inducement, but to most of us it was a welcome addition to our

incomes, and it gave our manager the right to call upon us at any time. We now had a hall, the Edgbaston Assembly Rooms, which, by the addition of extra dressing-rooms and by other changes, had been made suitable for our purpose ; we had central offices, rehearsal and store-rooms, a journal and a company of paid actors. During the four years which we had been working our skill had improved and we were able to give performances that were, I think, fairly competent. The audiences were small, but we were able to depend upon an intelligent reception of the plays we were presenting. I think that there were few amateur companies who started a season with equal advantages. From 30th September to 27th April we gave forty-one performances, not including those given away from home. In addition to revivals, we produced eleven fresh plays, bringing up our total list to twenty-eight. The first play of the season was a revival of *The Return of the Prodigal*, and this was followed in October by a revival of *The Fantasticks*, together with a new play, *The Labyrinth*, by Oliver W. F. Lodge. Yeats's *Deirdre* was put on at the end of the same month ; it was an impressive production and was played with great dignity. *She Stoops to Conquer* followed, and in November we came to the first of Drinkwater's original plays, *Cophetua*, a little one-act play written in verse, with alternate rhymes, and containing passages of considerable beauty. The play was printed as the third of ‘The Pilgrim Players

Series,' and copies of the original edition are now scarce and valuable.

In December we gave our first performance of Galsworthy's *Silver Box*. The frequent changes of scene were difficult on our small stage, but the difficulty was surmounted without making the 'waits' unduly tedious. The Police Court scene was particularly effective. Our 'Roper' (W. B. Thurstfield) is in private life a solicitor and Magistrate's Clerk, and he arranged all the details of a scene that was familiar to him and made it convincing.

A new children's play by Drinkwater wound up the year 1911. *Puss in Boots*, as written for this first production, was a simple and straightforward telling of the nursery story, but it rather fell between two stools : it was obviously written for children, and yet it had not quite the qualities that appeal to them. Much of it was delightful, but it dragged in places, and Drinkwater realized this when he saw it on the stage. He afterwards made considerable alterations in it, and in its new form it has been revived at the Repertory Theatre.

In February 1912 we produced our first Ibsen play, *An Enemy of the People*. Of this performance the *Daily News* critic wrote :

Last night's performance of *An Enemy of the People* at the Edgbaston Assembly Rooms was in many ways excellent. It is a principle of 'The Pilgrims' that the names of the players shall not be given, so I am unable

to state the identity of the brilliant young actor who conveyed so convincingly the public zeal and passionate disappointment of Dr. Stockmann. . . . One could not hope to find the character of Dr. Stockmann more completely realized than it was last night. . . . Another character that stood out in last night's performance was that of Aslaksen, the printer, who voiced the attitude of that ‘compact majority’ against whose timorousness the medical officer declaims. It was an impersonation well on the side of caricature, it is true, but it was perfectly consistent and delightful. Hovstad, the editor, was an excellent study, once one had overcome a prejudice against his obviously false beard.’

Stockmann was played by Frank Moore and Aslaksen by Scott Sunderland, both of whom are still members of the Birmingham Repertory Company ; Drinkwater was the Hovstad. The following extract is from an anonymous letter sent to the Repertory Theatre in 1922 by a member of the audience concerning his recollections of the work of ‘The Pilgrim Players’ :

An amusing recollection of an impression created by seeing Mr. Barry Jackson and Mr. Scott Sunderland in *An Enemy of the People* at Edgbaston (in which play Mr. Frank Moore had what was, perhaps, his finest part as ‘Dr. Stockmann’) was that for quite a considerable time I believed Mr. Barry Jackson to be in appearance something between a rabid Socialist and a colonial backwoodsman. He would, himself, recollect the brilliant shirt and somewhat battered headgear which formed part of his costume in a rather ranting part

[Billing]. Mr. Scott Sunderland I imagined as a middle-aged person of unprepossessing mien, with a weird voice. It was some time afterwards that I discovered them both to be young men of engaging aspect and great charm.

In April we were invited to give three performances at the Liverpool Repertory Theatre; the plays selected were Yeats's *Deirdre* and *The Interlude of Youth*. Of the visit the *Liverpool Courier* said :

'The Pilgrim Players,' who are the Repertory Company of Birmingham, and who for three nights of this week are occupying the stage of Liverpool's Repertory Theatre, are well named. They are veritably pilgrims in an alien world of theatredom, and the morality play which they submitted last evening is as strange and unusual amongst ordinary stage works as an old-time pilgrim would seem in the midst of the Lord Street saunterers of to-day. . . . The play was quite excellently done. These 'Pilgrim Players' are modest, and no names are set forth on the programme. 'Charity's' lines were well delivered with a sad and sweet urgency of appeal, 'Youth' was very handsome, very eager, very buoyant, and caught admirably a touch of ecstatic fervour in conversion; and 'Riot,' 'Luxury,' 'Pride,' and 'Humility' contributed their share effectively. The first place on the programme, however, was given to a performance of Mr. W. B. Yeats's poetic play *Deirdre*. Simple, yet impressively staged, the play held the audience in a grip of tense expectancy, though the musicians, admirably still and reposeful as they were, failed perhaps to attain and keep the full note of warning and fate, whilst Con-

chubar scarcely seemed other than a very modern and somewhat weak figure, instead of a resolute, vengeful old king. But Deirdre was played with great appreciation of the wavering emotions of the part—passion, fear, pleading, icy resolve—and with very considerable nervous power. One of the musicians had beauty of voice and face. And there was always the charm of Mr. Yeats's poetry, so full of the sense of a mystic, shadowy twilight, that the stage, although only a few feet away, seems set in a distant place of 'old, unhappy, far-off things' that were yet hauntingly beautiful and had their being just that lovely songs might be made about them.

Attendances at Liverpool were rather small, and our share of the takings did not quite cover expenses, but the experience was an interesting one and was enjoyed by all the players, in spite of the difficulties of the journey. The day was bitterly cold, a railway strike was on, and the Sunday journey took about three times as long as usual.

The programme of the remainder of the season included, besides a number of revivals, Shaw's *How He Lied to Her Husband*, W. W. Gibson's *Womankind*, and Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. This play was the last 'Pilgrim' production, and it is of interest to note that it was also the play with which the Birmingham Repertory Theatre was opened ten months later.

Long before the season terminated all 'The Pilgrims' knew that this was to be the end of their work under existing conditions. During the previous year there had been rumours of Jackson's intention of

building a theatre. Various sites had been considered. One was in New Street, where the building of the Royal Society of Artists stands ; another was that of a picture-house in Bristol Street. It was not until the 10th June 1912 that it was publicly announced that a site in Station Street had been secured and that building would begin immediately. Except for one performance of *The Importance of Being Earnest* at the Theatre Royal, Worcester, in the following December, the work of 'The Pilgrim Players' was ended.

The last thing the society did was to present to its leader, Barry Jackson, his portrait painted by W. J. Wainwright. It bore the following inscription :

PRESENTED TO  
BARRY VINCENT JACKSON

ON THE 28TH JUNE, 1913, BY  
MEMBERS OF THE LATE SOCIETY KNOWN AS  
THE PILGRIM PLAYERS

As a mark of their affectionate regard and in commemoration of the establishment by him of this  
Theatre.

The presentation was actually made on the stage of the Repertory Theatre in June 1913, on the last night of the theatre's first season, and the portrait now hangs in the theatre entrance-hall.

And so the society came to an end. It had been at work for five years ; more than 160 performances had been given of twenty-eight plays. Seven of these had

been played nowhere else and the remainder were such as were rarely, if ever, to be seen in Birmingham. The selection displayed considerable catholicity of taste, while keeping to an unusually high literary level. Of the quality of the acting it is difficult to speak. Some of it was undoubtedly good, but generally, I suppose, it was very similar to that of other really serious amateur societies. At the same time, I feel that there was a difference between ‘The Pilgrims’ and all other bands of players. Its skill may not have been greater, nor its list of plays more remarkable, for some of the younger companies are doing wonderful work. I think the difference was rather in our attitude to the Drama, an attitude summed up by Drinkwater in his lines on the opening of the theatre :

In these walls  
Look not for that light trickery which falls  
To death at birth, bought piecemeal at the will  
Of apes who seek to ply their mimic skill ;  
Here shall the Player work as work he may,  
Yet shall he work in service of the Play.

May you that wait and we that serve so grow  
In wisdom as adventuring we go,  
That some unwavering light from us may shine.  
We have the challenge of the mighty line—  
God grant us grace to give the counter-sign.

‘The Pilgrims’ attempt to give the ‘counter-sign’ was the Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

## CHAPTER II

### A CHRONICLE, 1913-1919

**P**REPARATION.—Jackson had selected a young Birmingham architect, S. N. Cooke, to design and build his new theatre. The plans were completed early in September 1912, and building operations began at once. In the digging of the foundations a small silver spoon was found, which was looked upon as an augury of success ; it now hangs in a case in the theatre entrance-hall. The building was pushed on rapidly and relays of workmen worked day and night, the site being lit at night by powerful electric lights. We old 'Pilgrims' used often to stand and watch the work going forward at midnight, and Drinkwater tells of it in his poem, 'The Building.'

And, while the city sleeps, in central poise  
Of quiet, lamps are flaming in the night,  
Blown to long tongues by winds that moan between  
The growing walls, and throwing misty light  
On swart men bearing bricks of bright red clay  
In laden hods : and ever the thin noise  
Of trowels deftly fashioning the clean  
Long lines that are the shaping of proud thought.

Ghost-like they move between the day and day,  
These men whose labour strictly shall be wrought  
Into the captive image of a dream.<sup>1</sup>

It proved impossible to have the theatre ready for opening at Christmas, as had been hoped, and in the meantime the business of preparing for the first season was conducted at 'The Pilgrim Players' office in John Bright Street.

Drinkwater was appointed General Manager, and I gladly relinquished my commercial career to accept the position of Business Manager. Jackson, of course, was then, as he still is, Director. We found the organizing of a theatre to be a very different matter from the conducting of an amateur company. None of us knew much about the business side of a theatre's work, but we picked up what information we could, and for the remainder depended upon common sense. Most of the methods we evolved afterwards proved to be similar to those in use elsewhere, so I suppose we did not go very far wrong. Gradually we collected what we supposed to be a suitable staff for the working of the theatre—Stage Manager, T. Foden Flint, with Ivan Firth as his assistant, a stage carpenter, two electricians, a scene-painter, two dressmakers, door-keepers, attendants, fireman, labourers, and cleaners. Miss Rochelle Thomas, a former 'Pilgrim,' was appointed to superintend the dress-making. A clerk to assist in the administration and a booking clerk com-

<sup>1</sup> *Cromwell and Other Poems*, 1913.

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pleted our first group of workers. We intended to work without an orchestra, and did so for the first two seasons. But we soon found that certain changes were necessary. For example, we had too many attendants and too small a clerical staff. That of the box office was increased to two within the first fortnight, and an additional clerk put into the management soon after. At the present time we have three box office clerks and four in the business department. The workshops had not been built, and there was no room at John Bright Street for constructing scenery, so our old home, the Mission Hall, was again hired, this time for a carpenter's shop. From here, when made, the flats were carted to one of the other theatres, where arrangements had been made for the use of a paint frame, and when painted were carted again to our theatre. All this involved delay and a good deal of expense, but for the time no other procedure was possible.

Early in January the Company assembled and rehearsals began at the 'Pilgrim' offices, the theatre not being ready until a few days before the opening. Our first circular had been issued a little earlier.

## THE BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE

'The Pilgrim Players' are able to announce that, after six years of preparatory work, their theatre is now being built. A central and convenient site has been acquired in Station Street, within five minutes of all the stations and tram termini in the city. The stage will be the most

completely equipped of its kind in the country, with provision for the great variety of work which it is the company's purpose to produce; the auditorium will be so planned as to enable everybody to see and hear in comfort. All seats, from 1s. upwards, may be booked. The new company will be known as 'The Birmingham Repertory Company.'

A list of prospective plays followed, but as it differed somewhat from the programme actually carried out, it is of little interest. At the end of January the licensing justices granted a full dramatic licence, and on 10th February the first booking plans were opened.

*First Season, 1913.*—The following actors were engaged for the first season :

Felix Aylmer.	Miss Cicely Byrne.
Ivor Barnard.	„ Margaret Chatwin.
John Dunn-Yarker.	„ Margaret Dudley.
W. Ribton Haines.	„ Cathleen Orford.
Noel Shammon.	„ Betty Pinchard.
Scott Sunderland.	
E. Stuart Vinden.	

All the ladies in this list, except Miss Dudley, had been 'Pilgrims.' Miss Dudley and five of the seven men had been selected by Jackson from various companies; the remaining two, Dunn-Yarker and Shammon, were young men beginning their stage careers.

In addition, a number of 'The Pilgrims' assisted in our earlier productions, although not engaged at

that time as members of the stock company. These included Frank Moore, Claude Graham, Miss Isabel Thornton, Miss Louise de Lacy. The Director, the General Manager, the Stage Manager and his assistant, and the Costume Designer also played parts when additional actors were necessary, Drinkwater always appearing under the name of 'John Darnley,' and Flint under that of 'Thomas Foden.'

The theatre opened on Saturday, 15th February, with a performance of *Twelfth Night*, with the following cast :

Orsino . . . . .	Felix Aylmer.
Sebastian . . . . .	E. Stuart Vinden.
Antonio . . . . .	Frank Moore.
A Sea Captain . . . . .	Thomas Foden.
Valentine . . . . .	Ivan Firth.
Curio . . . . .	John Dunn-Yarker.
Sir Toby Belch . . . . .	W. Ribton Haines.
Sir Andrew Aguecheek . . . . .	W. Brunton.
Malvolio . . . . .	John Darnley.
Fabian . . . . .	Ivor Barnard.
Feste . . . . .	Scott Sunderland.
1st Officer . . . . .	Thomas Kay.
2nd Officer . . . . .	Noel Shammon.
Olivia . . . . .	Margaret Chatwin
Viola . . . . .	Cicely Byrne.
Maria . . . . .	Cathleen Orford.

Before the curtain rose Sir Oliver Lodge, at that time Principal of the University of Birmingham, made a short speech and read a sheaf of congratulatory

telegrams. After this Jackson read the 'Lines on the Opening of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre' written for the occasion by John Drinkwater.

Jackson had arranged very simple settings. Curtains were used for interiors, with steps and pillars, and the garden was merely a balustrade in front of the plaster horizon, by the help of which some lovely lighting effects were obtained. Colour and suggestion were all that was attempted, and the result in some scenes was strikingly beautiful. The audience was as enthusiastic as first night audiences always are, and everything looked very promising for the success of the theatre. The attendance, however, dropped off considerably during the week, but *Twelfth Night* has proved one of our most popular plays. We have revived it nine times, the latest being for a fortnight in April 1922, when it was entirely reproduced by H. K. Ayliff, with new settings and costumes by Jackson. Altogether, seventy-six performances of it have been given at this theatre.

Galsworthy's *The Pigeon* was selected as our first modern play. For some reason it is not a favourite example of the work of this distinguished author, although it is one of the pleasantest; all the characters have attractive qualities that to some extent redeem their weakness. The play was revived twice during the first year, but with little success, and we have not attempted to do anything with it since. *Candida* followed, the leading part being played by Miss Madge

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Mackintosh, who gave a performance that at times reached greatness. We have given altogether fifty-five performances of this play, the last of its six revivals being in January 1922. After *Everyman* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, both of which had been produced by 'The Pilgrim Players,' we gave the first presentation in Birmingham of a play that has become the most popular in our repertoire—St. John Hankin's *The Cassilis Engagement*. It is surprising that this amusing comedy is not played more often elsewhere. We have revived it nine times, and it has always been well received. This was followed by a striking contrast in Yeats's beautiful dramatic poem *The Countess Cathleen*. A fragile piece of work such as this needs producing with great delicacy, and Drinkwater made a fine attempt, but he had not, at that early date in his career, sufficient experience to bring out all its mystic beauty. As it is not of sufficient length to fill a whole evening, *Press Cuttings* was performed as an after-piece. Then *The Silver Box* and *The Tragedy of Nan* brought us to the Shakespeare season. During the last fortnight in April three Shakespeare plays were presented—*King John*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Twelfth Night*. The scenery for the first-named play was similar to that used for its production by 'The Pilgrim Players,' and the settings Jackson devised for the two others were afterwards greatly improved. A revival of Wilde's comedy was followed by *An Enemy of the People*,

and then came a double bill—Lascelles Abercrombie's little tragedy *The Adder*, and Lady Gregory's *The White Cockade*. A beautiful and simple setting was arranged for the third act of the latter play—the pier at Duncannon. It was a night scene ; just a star-lit sky and a low sea-wall, over which, on the left, could be seen a sloping mast and a dark sail. There was nothing more, but the performance was held up every night by the rounds of applause which greeted the set when the curtain rose. Revivals of *The Cassilis Engagement*, *The Pigeon*, and *The Silver Box* carried us into June. Then came the fourth Shakespearean production of the season, *The Merchant of Venice*. For this we used our old *Two Gentlemen of Verona* curtains, and the costumes were of the same style as those used in that play, but coloured in the most delicate pastel shades. The very pale yellows, pinks, blues, and other colours could be obtained only by dyeing the material ourselves. Our first triple bill succeeded—*Ser Taldo's Bride*, Hankin's *The Constant Lover*, and a new play by a Birmingham author, *re Pilgridge*. With a production of *The Fantasticks*, preceded by Coleby's *Their Point of View*, we came to the last night of the season, when *The Merchant of Venice* was revived.

In nineteen weeks twenty-two plays had been produced, fifteen of which were of full length, the remainder being in one act. F. A. Besant Rice, who had given up his position as dramatic critic to the

*Birmingham Post* and continued to produce modern plays, had directed ten of them, Drinkwater six, Pinchard four, and Jackson two ; one of the actors had played eighteen parts and the others from twelve to sixteen each. The strain had been considerable and all had earned a rest. The theatre closed for nine weeks, six of which were holiday, the other three being given up to preparing for the autumn. Full salaries were paid while the theatre was closed to all those actors who were returning to us in the autumn. This has always been the custom at this theatre, and it has proved a satisfactory policy. Besides enabling the actors to take a holiday and prepare themselves for the strenuous work of the autumn, it encourages them to remain with the theatre, a thing to be desired when any revivals of a previous season's plays are contemplated.

*Second Season, 1913-14.*—A few changes in the company occurred during the vacation. Miss Dudley resigned and she was replaced by Miss Maud Gill ; Miss Mary Raby also was added to the company at this time. Flint, who had plenty of enthusiasm and intelligence for his work, realized, after five months, that he had not sufficient practical experience to continue as Stage Manager, and voluntarily stepped back to the position of assistant in place of Firth, who had resigned. The higher position was taken by Frank D. Clewlow, an actor, stage manager and producer of wide experience.

The season opened at the end of August with Bernard Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*, which was followed by revivals of *The Tragedy of Nan* and *The Return of the Prodigal*. Of the triple bill which came next Maeterlinck's *The Death of Tintagiles* was the most important play. For this we used no painted scenery, merely a background of black curtains, which, for the last scene, had a great door in the centre. The scenes on the hill-top and in the corridor were played on the apron stage, with the tableau-curtains lowered. The effect was sombre, but it emphasized the tragic atmosphere of the play. Odette Goimbault, a child actress of striking ability, was specially engaged for the difficult part of Tintagiles. It was preceded at each performance by Granville Barker's version of Schnitzler's *A Farewell Supper* (one of the 'Anatol' dialogues) and followed by Chapin's *Augustus in Search of a Father*. After a revival of *Admiral Guinea* we presented the first part of *Henry IV*. At that time we were unable to cast the part of Falstaff within the company, and the well-known Shakespearean actor, Allan Wilkie, was called in for it. Robert Vansittart's *The Cap and Bells* was our next production, exactly six months after it had been given for the first time at the Little Theatre, London. With the help of Frank Clewlow, Jackson arranged an amusing, but rather modern production of Sheridan's *The Critic*, and then, after another revival of *The Importance of Being Earnest* and a few performances of Gilbert

Murray's version of *Medea*, the company spent a week at the Theatre Royal, Worcester, giving performances there of *Candida*, *The Critic*, and *Augustus in Search of a Father*. During that week the Repertory Theatre was occupied by Kirsteen Graeme and Esmé Percy's company playing Galsworthy's *Joy*, Ervine's *The Orangeman*, Pinero's *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, Halbe's *The River*, and Houghton's *Ginger*. On returning to Birmingham we gave performances of *Candida*, *The Pigeon*, and *The Voysey Inheritance*. On the four evenings before Christmas we presented three episodes from the Chester mystery plays, the three being *The Salutation and Nativity*, *The Shepherds' Play*, and *The Three Kings*. On Boxing Day we gave a Christmas revival of *The Critic*; this had been well received when we produced it two months before, and made a merry holiday entertainment. One of the newspapers described it as 'a riot of fun,' and it lived up to this description. Jackson had been at work on a new children's play, *The Christmas Party*, but it was not ready until a fortnight after Christmas. When produced it proved very unequal. The first half, where the two children who are host and hostess receive their guests, the heroes and heroines of nursery lore, was excellent, but the second half was unquestionably dull. This part was the entertainment provided for the 'Party' and took the form of a living Punch and Judy show. Before rehearsals started an experienced showman had given performances with his

puppets to the actors taking part, and the dialogue had been taken down in shorthand. The show was accurately reproduced by the living actors, but all the fun had gone out of it. The unhappy players blushed under their paint as they made jokes having no merit but antiquity, amusing when part of the dolls' dialogue but painful when spoken by men and women. The audiences enjoyed the first part, and tried to be polite about the latter half, but we all realized that it was no good, and before the play was revived a new second act, as good as the first, was written.

When the holiday season was over performances were given of *The Cassilis Engagement* and *As You Like It*, which brought us to the anniversary of our opening date. To celebrate it a free performance of *The Tragedy of Nan* was given. A week before this event it had been announced that tickets for the performance would be given without charge to all who asked for them, up to the capacity of the theatre. That night the house was filled with a very mixed audience, but the play was followed with interest and more than usual enthusiasm was shown. It was an interesting experiment, but we have not repeated it, since, so far as we could tell, it brought no new friends to the theatre. After *Nan* came *Candida* and another triple bill made up of Hankin's *The Burglar that Failed*, Gilbert Cannan's *Miles Dixon*, and Shaw's *How He Lied to Her Husband*. It was in the middle play of this bill that for the first time we showed clouds

moving across the sky. With the use of a 'Heaven' and a magic lantern this is a simple matter, and the same device has been used many times since, but as probably it had not been seen in Birmingham before it created a good deal of interest.

During the same week two performances of *Medea* were given, and the next week was filled with *The Fantasticks* preceded by *Augustus in Search of a Father*. Then came our first production of *David Ballard* by M'Evoy, and a revival of *She Stoops to Conquer*. The run of this second play was interrupted by two performances by the company from the Vieux Colombier Theatre, Paris. They played Molière's *La Jalousie de Barbouille*, de Musset's *Barbarine*, and Renard's *Le Pain de Ménage*. Another of our triple bills was made up of Strindberg's *The Outlaw*, Shaw's *How He Lied to Her Husband*, and *The Mock Doctor*, the last being Fielding's version of Molière's *Le Médecin Malgré Lui*. The Strindberg play was described by one of the critics as 'a wretched play by a wretched writer,' and for a week a furious newspaper correspondence raged round this very innocuous example of the Swedish dramatist's work. After another week of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, we paid a visit to Nottingham, where performances of *The Cassilis Engagement* and *David Ballard* were given. While we were away the theatre was occupied by Leigh Lovel and Octavia Kenmore with their company, who presented *Hedda Gabler* and *A Doll's House*.

The remainder of April was given to *You Never Can Tell*, *The Return of the Prodigal*, *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*, and early in May came the most interesting production of the season—John Drinkwater's *Rebellion*. *Rebellion* is an interesting piece of work, strong and full of colour ; the blank verse is musical and good to speak, rising in places to passages of considerable beauty. The play is weakest in its characterization, even the most clearly drawn characters appearing at times to be merely mouthpieces for the poet's lines. At the same time the play has great dignity and has sufficient interest of plot to hold an audience. Barry Jackson's scenery and costumes may be counted among the best things he has done ; though belonging to no place or time, they were rather in the Assyrian manner, and emphasized the atmosphere of the poetry. The first night's reception was an enthusiastic one ; the audience included three other poets besides the author—W. H. Davies, Lascelles Abercrombie, and W. W. Gibson. Four more plays were staged before the summer vacation, *The Tragedy of Nan*, *The Cap and Bells*, *The Critic*, and *His Excellency the Governor*. We finished on 20th June with a miscellaneous bill made up of scenes from four different plays that had proved popular.

The work during this season had not been quite so exacting as that of the first. There had been forty-two weeks in which to present thirty-three plays, and of these nine had been revivals. Even so the record

is a creditable one ; but fortunately we have not found it necessary to produce twenty-four new plays in any subsequent season. Rice and Drinkwater directed most of these thirty-three plays, but Jackson and Pinchard were each responsible for three, and Vinden and Clewlow also took a share in this side of the work. One production was arranged by Harcourt Williams and another by Stanley Drewitt, both of them being specially called in for the purpose. For two weeks during the season the company played in theatres away from Birmingham, but both visits were to small towns and met with little success.

As the stock of scenery accumulated, additional storage accommodation became necessary, and premises were erected on land adjoining the theatre ; we commenced to use the new building on its completion in the March of this year. It consists of store-rooms, carpenter's workshop, and scene-painting room, and in it all the scenery used in the Repertory Theatre since that time has been made.

Most of us were away holiday-making when the news came of the outbreak of war. We hurried back to headquarters to deliberate as to the course to be pursued. For a few days we were unable to come to any decision : the blow had come so suddenly and the theatre we had started to build up with so much hope seemed about to fall in ruin around us. But very soon Jackson decided that whatever happened we must go on with the work so long as was humanly possible.

Several of the staff, old Army or Navy Reserve men, were called up for service at once and never came back to us. Some of the actors enlisted before the new season began, and we opened with a depleted company, a circumstance which made it impossible to produce the play that had been announced—Galsworthy's *Strife*.

*The Third Season*, 1914-15, started on the 29th August, the company consisting of

Felix Aylmer.	Miss Cicely Byrne.
Ivor Barnard.	„ Margaret Chatwin.
John Dunn-Yarker.	„ Maud Gill.
W. Ribton Haines.	„ Cathleen Orford.
E. Stuart Vinden.	„ Betty Pinchard.
Noel Shammon.	„ Mary Raby.

Joseph Dodd came to us from the Liverpool Repertory Theatre, as Assistant Stage Manager in place of Foden Flint, who was already in the Army, as also were Scott Sunderland, Claude Graham, and Melville Cooper. The opening play was Galsworthy's *The Eldest Son*, preceded by *The Black Sheep*, a new one-act comedy by Frank G. Layton, a local dramatist. Business dropped almost to nothing, but instead of cutting down expenses we tried to add to the attractiveness of the performances by installing a small permanent orchestra consisting of a string quartette and piano. We find this large enough for our little theatre and have never increased it except for special performances. Three of the original five members, Harold Mills, Frank

Edmonds, and Miss Harrod, are still with us. After a week of *You Never Can Tell* we produced Lascelles Abercrombie's amusing but cynical comedy *The End of the World*. With it was played Samuel Foote's *The Lyar*, a free version of Goldoni's play. A week of Martin's *Cupid and the Styx* carried us on to the end of September, when the stage was taken over for a week by Miss Darragh's company, and for a fortnight by Mr. Esmé Percy. On returning to Birmingham on 19th October we revived *David Ballard* while preparing a production of Massinger's once popular but now neglected masterpiece, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*. There was nothing noteworthy about the setting for this play, indeed it was an unusually unsuccessful arrangement of draperies. Miss Elizabeth Baker's *Chains* followed, and then another triple bill made up of Wilde's *A Florentine Tragedy*, Rose's *The Second Mrs. Banks*, and Shaw's *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets*. For the production of Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* Miss Octavia Kenmore was engaged to play the part of Gina Ekdal and Leigh Lovel was the producer. A revival of *Cupid and the Styx* was followed by Galsworthy's *Strife*, which we had had to postpone at the beginning of the season. Stanley Drewitt directed it and also played the part of Roberts, while that veteran actor, Robert Pateman, appeared as John Anthony. The Christmas plays were *She Stoops to Conquer* in the evenings, and *Cinderella* in the afternoons. *Cinderella* was specially written for

us, as a children's play, not a pantomime, by Miss Daisy Fisher, who also composed the incidental music ; it ran for more than a month. Ion Swinley joined the company just before Christmas and played in Goldsmith's comedy ; he remained with us for a little over a year. The plays for the first two months of the year were *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Charity that Began at Home*, and *The Silver Box*. On 22nd February the company started on its first tour, visiting Wolverhampton, Croydon, Brighton, and Leamington, with five plays from our repertoire and Ibsen's *The Master Builder*. They were away for five weeks, during which time the Birmingham theatre was occupied by A. E. Drinkwater's company with *Caste* for one week, and Esmé Percy's company for a month. The latter company presented nine plays, including Galsworthy's *The Little Man* and Verhaeren's *The Cloister*. On returning home in April our company produced Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance*, which was very popular and ran for two weeks instead of the usual one ; a single performance of *The Master Builder* was also given. The stage setting for *The Tempest*, our Shakespeare Festival play for this year, was particularly satisfying. The first scene—the wreck—was played on the apron stage in darkness, the only light coming in feeble glimmers from lanterns carried by some of the actors, and at the end of it there was a blinding flash of light, caused by the ignition of a quantity of magnesium powder

on the front of the stage. During the confusion caused by the sudden flash, the curtain rose, and very slowly the light came up, revealing the island scene, which stood for the remainder of the play. This scene was simple but effective. About half of the stage was covered with great jagged rocks, rising on the left side to the mouth of a cave. The rocks, the sea beyond and the sky were of brilliant blue, no other colour being used. Prospero, Miranda, Caliban and Ariel were dressed in blue, green, and grey, and the shipwrecked party in scarlet and brown. The play was given without cuts and with only one interval. Three new one-act plays, two of them by Birmingham men, followed. One of these was Drinkwater's *The Storm*,<sup>1</sup> a poetic play, which, while having very little actual movement, has more vigorous characterization than his earlier dramatic work. *The Return of the Prodigal*, Jones's *The Liars*, and Colman and Garrick's *The Clandestine Marriage* completed the season.

We found the first year of the war much less difficult than we had anticipated. In the early autumn theatre-going almost ceased, particularly among the more intelligent classes from which our audience is drawn. But there was a marked improvement before Christmas, and a still greater one in the spring, the total takings for the year being higher than those for the previous one. Twenty-two new plays had been

<sup>1</sup> Included in *Pawns*, 1917.

produced, Drinkwater and Rice again being responsible for most of them, though Jackson, Clewlow and Vinden had each directed one or more. There was no production of outstanding importance during this year, but a fair level of good work had been maintained. By the end of the season four of the actors and fifteen of the working staff were in the Army, two of the latter having already lost their lives. The actors who still remained in the theatre spent their Sundays at one of the local munition factories.

At the end of the season Miss Cicely Byrne resigned to take up a London engagement, and her place was taken by Miss Mary Merrall. Another resignation at this time was that of Miss Rochelle Thomas, who had started with us as a 'Pilgrim' and remained to superintend the wardrobe, also playing parts from time to time. She was not replaced, the wardrobe being placed under the control of the Stage Manager, with Miss Anne Fisher as head dressmaker.

*The Fourth Season*, 1915-16, began on the 4th September, after a ten weeks' vacation, with Sheridan's *The Rivals*. This had a fortnight's run and was succeeded by Hankin's *The Two Mr. Wetherbys*, and a new one-act play, *The Cobbler's Shop*, by Charles Forrest. A triple bill followed, *The Battle of the Pump*, *King Lear's Wife*, and *The Lyar*. *King Lear's Wife*, a verse play by Gordon Bottomley, raised a storm of protest. Before production the Censor had

made a few cuts, and even then it was hailed by the critics as 'a tragedy that prostitutes art,' 'a beastly play,' 'almost shockingly crude,' 'a gloomy play,' 'a drama of blood, lust, and death.' To-day it is recognized as a powerful play of great beauty, but this was the first time that any of Bottomley's work had been seen on the stage, and, as is often the case with original work, it met with little appreciation. There followed a production of M'Evoy's, *When the Devil was Ill*, and then *The Keepers of the Garden*, a pleasant but rather sentimental comedy by Ion Swinley. The author, being a member of the company, directed it himself, and it met with general approval. After *The Merchant of Venice* and *Candida* we gave another new play, *His Majesty's Pleasure*, by the novelist, Conal O'Riordan. This comedy, though delightfully witty, well played, and charming to look at, dressed as it was in the period of Henri Quatre, was not particularly well received. Perhaps the satire is a little too sharply pointed, but whatever the reason, it did not meet with enough encouragement to justify a revival. It was preceded at each performance by J. O. Francis's one-act play, *The Poacher*. A revival of *A Woman of No Importance* was succeeded by the first production of Elizabeth Baker's *Over a Garden Wall*, an amusing comedy which we afterwards revived several times. This was the last play in which W. Ribton Haines appeared, as he now resigned to join the Army. He had been with us since the open-



Photo: Lewis & Randall

## "THE FAITHFUL"

DESIGNED BY BARRY V. JACKSON

*The arrangement for the interior scene is shown; for the exterior scene the side curtains were withdrawn and the opening at the back closed by a shutter on which a conventional window was painted. Prevailing colour grey.*



ing of the theatre two and a half years earlier, and was regarded with affection by both the public and his fellow-players. His military career was short—he was killed in action within fifteen months. Paul Smythe was engaged at this time to take part in the next production, that of Masefield's Japanese play, *The Faithful*, perhaps the most interesting event of the year. For it Jackson designed a dignified setting in grey in his characteristically simple style, which formed an effective background for his brilliantly coloured dresses. Drinkwater directed the production, emphasizing the poetic beauty of this austere tragedy. Simplicity of action is an advantage in a play such as this, whose principal glory is its verbal music. He succeeded in restraining movement so that some scenes were little more than tableaux, and the great passages gained in impressiveness as they rang out through the stillness. Drinkwater's production of *The Faithful* remains in my memory as one of the loveliest and most moving stage presentations I have ever seen. William J. Rea now joined the company, which had lost another member in John Dunn-Yarker, a promising young actor who had just arrived at military age and now went into training with the Inns of Court O.T.C. For Christmas we revived *The Christmas Party* with the new second act. It was played every afternoon for two months, and in its revised form it remains the most popular of all our children's plays. In the evenings *The Clandestine*

*Marriage* was given for the first month, and was followed by *The Cassilis Engagement*. Ion Swinley and Miss Mary Merrall left us at this time to take up work in London, Swinley's place being taken by Arthur C. Rose, recruited from the Liverpool Repertory Company. Miss Dorothy Green played the leading lady's part in the next production, Calderon's *The Fountain*, but she was unable to remain in Birmingham, and Miss Mielle Maund joined us for the remainder of the season. Ivor Barnard, one of the original company, also resigned at this time, London claiming his efficient services also. The next plays were *When the Devil was Ill*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Twelfth Night*. I think it was for this revival of this last that Jackson designed the setting used for all its subsequent performances until that in 1923. It was an example of his best work—beautiful, easy to use, and perfectly adapted to the action of the play. A set of three concave steps stretched across the stage from side to side, and rising from the top of them were eight slender columns, four on each side, supporting a slightly arched roof. The bases and capitals were black and there were black lines along the edges of the steps, the remainder, including the stage itself, being a warm yellow. Some of the interior scenes had the background removed, showing a blue sky beyond the pillars. Curtains, dropped sometimes in front of the pillars and sometimes behind them, made further variations possible, and the sea-shore scene



“MACBETH”: THE COURTYARD  
DESIGNED BY BARRY V. JACKSON



was played on the apron stage with the tableau-curtains lowered. When, in the following April, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Macbeth* were played, a similar method was adopted. For both these productions the steps were straight instead of curved; for *The Merry Wives* they were spanned by a flat Tudor arch, in light grey, and for *Macbeth* by a heavy Norman arch, supported on short thick pillars. In all three the principle was the same. But before the April Shakespeare Festival there was a triple bill—*Her Proper Pride*, a new play by Harker and Prior, *The Storm*, and Tchekov's *The Proposal*—as well as a revival of *The Charity that Began at Home* and a production of Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*. The last was played entirely in curtains. As the Shakespeare tercentenary occurred this year, our Shakespeare Festival was on a bigger scale than on previous occasions. We ran it for five weeks, giving performances of *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Tempest*, and *Macbeth*. In addition to these there were two lectures on 'The Original Music, Musical Instruments, and Dances of Shakespeare's plays,' by Arnold Dolmetsch, with illustrations by himself and his family. The Bishop of Birmingham (Dr. Russell Wakefield) also gave an address in the theatre on 'The Shakespeare Tercentenary.' The festival was a success from both the artistic and the business standpoints. The last weeks of the season were given over to two Shaw plays—

*You Never Can Tell* and *Arms and the Man*—and M'Evoy's *David Ballard*.

The last night of the season, 21st June, did not see the end of the year's work. It had been arranged to spend a month at the Buxton Opera House, where we opened on 3rd July. We took the whole of the scenery and properties necessary for the eight long plays and three short ones which we had undertaken to present, as well as a solidly built false proscenium, to adapt our material to a larger stage. The stock was more than the Opera House would hold and it had to be stored in the pavilion of the adjoining Winter Gardens. The weather being particularly pleasant during that month, business was proportionately bad, the visitors preferring the Gardens to the theatre, but we spent a very agreeable month there. We lost four members of the company at the end of the Buxton season, E. Stuart Vinden, who was called up for military service, A. C. Rose, Miss Mielle Maund, and Miss Vera Bassano. The latter lady had come to us as a pupil in the spring of 1915 and had during the past season done some very creditable work.

Fewer new plays had been produced during this year, seventeen in all, of which six had been in one act only. F. A. Besant Rice had resigned before the season started and Drinkwater was now doing most of the producing. He had very able help in this direction from Clewlow, and several members of the company also assisted. Jackson directed only the



"MACBETH": A ROOM IN MACBETH'S CASTLE  
DESIGNED BY BARRY V. JACKSON



first play, *The Rivals*, as he spent the year in London driving the car he had presented to the London Ambulance Column. The year had been a difficult one, owing partly to the changes in the company, partly to the rapidly increasing cost of running the theatre, and to a large extent to the Director's absence. He still sent designs and instructions, but that was by no means the same thing as having him on the spot to guide and encourage us all. The Military Service Act had come into operation, and we had a hard struggle to keep sufficient actors and staff to carry on the work.

*The Fifth Season*, 1916-17, began on 16th September. At this time the company was made up of

Felix Aylmer.	Miss Margaret Chatwin.
Noel Shammon.	„ Cathleen Orford.
Joseph Dodd.	„ Betty Pinchard.
William J. Rea.	„ Mary Raby.
William Armstrong.	„ Maud Gill.
Alfred J. Brooks.	„ Cicely Byrne.
	„ Dorothy Taylor.

Brooks had come to us late in the previous season with very little stage experience ; Miss Taylor, who had been at the theatre as a pupil and had shown considerable promise, was taken into the stock company.

The season opened with Goldsmith's *The Good-Natured Man*, which was followed by *The Education of Mr. Surrage* (Allan Monkhouse), and *Cupid and the Styx*. Then came a noteworthy triple bill—

Masefield's *The Sweeps of '98*, Drinkwater's *The God of Quiet*,<sup>1</sup> and the play, at that time anonymous, *The Inca of Perusalem*. *The Inca*, of which this was the original production, was announced as 'by a Member of the Royal Society of Literature,' but it is now known that its author is Bernard Shaw. Arthur J. Gaskin designed a lovely scene and costumes for *The God of Quiet*, a new play in rhymed verse. After a week of *The Silver Box* we arranged a fortnight of Russian plays. These were Griboyedov's *The Misfortune of Being Clever*, Tolstoy's *The First Distiller*, Everinov's *The Merry Death*, and Tchekov's *The Proposal*. The last three proved so popular that we repeated them at the beginning of December. Before this, however, we produced, for the first time, Eden Phillpotts' comedy, *The Farmer's Wife*. It was directed by the late A. E. Drinkwater, and at once became a general favourite. It has had a number of revivals, being last played in Birmingham at Christmas 1923, when it had a run of thirty-nine performances. We took it to the Royal Court Theatre, London, in February 1924, where it is still running. *The Cassilis Engagement* followed, and then the revival of the Russian triple bill. Afterwards came our first attempt at opera, *The Sumida River*, composed by Clarence Raybould, the libretto being translated from the Japanese by Marie C. Stopes and Joji Sakurai. The children's play for this Christmas was Drinkwater's *Puss in Boots*. The play had been largely

<sup>1</sup> Included in *Pawns*, 1917.

re-written since its original production by 'The Pilgrims' and it had been newly set to music by Clarence Raybould. Norman Page played 'Puss' for the first four weeks, but other engagements precluded his remaining longer with us and his place was taken by Miles Malleon, who also appeared in the evening play *The Critic*. Several changes in the company occurred about this time. King,<sup>1</sup> the Assistant Stage Manager, left in December, as did Miss Betty Pinchard. King's place was taken by Richard Wayne. In February Armstrong resigned on account of ill-health. Harold French joined us in January, and 'Nicholas Bly,' who when off the stage is the well-known novelist Gilbert Cannan, two months later. *Candida*, *Thompson*, and *Nan* took us up to the end of February. *Cupid and the Styx*, the next play, had as a curtain raiser a new one-act play, *The Wounded*, written by Robert de Smet, a Belgian man of letters, at that time living in Birmingham. *While Rome Burns* followed, a new comedy by a Manchester dramatist, E. H. Longson, then *The Education of Mr. Surrage*, another triple bill, the middle play of which was Yeats's *The Hour Glass*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and again a triple bill. This last included the finest of Drinkwater's one-act plays, *X=O*,<sup>2</sup> *A Night of the Trojan War*. *X=O* is an indictment of the wastefulness of war. It had a special message

<sup>1</sup> Dennis King, who had been Call Boy, succeeded Dodd as A.S.M. at beginning of Fourth Season.

<sup>2</sup> Included in *Pawns*, 1917

for the time, although, Drinkwater tells me, it was conceived and partly written some years earlier. The play has only men characters, so Cannan wrote a play to go with it which, as he said, should give opportunities to the ladies. This was his satirical little comedy *Everybody's Husband*, in which there are five women and only one man. For Shakespeare's birthday *Twelfth Night* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* were presented. A new setting for the latter play was designed by Jackson, but he could not superintend its building, as by this time he was in the Navy, and the setting carried out in his absence was not satisfactory. Aylmer also joined the Navy at the end of the Shakespeare season and his place was taken by Oliver Johnston. After a week of *Over a Garden Wall*, Synge's *The Tinker's Wedding* was produced as part of a triple bill. The Afternoon Theatre had given a performance of this play in London in 1909, but it had never been produced as part of any theatre's ordinary work. Miss Maire O'Neill produced it and played the part of Mary Byrne. The triple bill as a whole was well received at the first two performances—Saturday and Monday—but on the Tuesday there was trouble. For that evening the whole of the seats in the balcony were booked up in advance, nearly half of them to one person for a party. Had we known who the party were we should have been a little less pleased. About an hour before the time for the performance I received a telephone message from some one who refused to

give a name, to the effect that there would probably be a disturbance in the theatre that night. I could get no further information. I asked for help from the police, and a few constables, about half a dozen, I think, were sent. The balcony audience was somewhat restless during the first play, *The Workhouse Ward*, but apparently enjoyed it. As the curtain went up on *Everybody's Husband* there were two or three shouts, but they were quickly silenced ; but when *The Tinker's Wedding* began pandemonium was let loose. The row was dreadful. Boos, hisses, shouts, and songs prevented a single word of the play from being heard, so the curtain was dropped and the lights turned up. After a few minutes the noise abated and again we prepared to start, but the result was the same. Drinkwater then walked on to the stage, and with his quiet manner very quickly calmed the storm and obtained a hearing. He suggested that, as he did not understand what all the fuss was about, the section of the audience making the protest should choose a spokesman who would explain their objection. One of their leaders then stood up and said that their main objection to the play was the representing of the Catholic priesthood in an untrue and unfavourable light. He regretted that he and his friends had inconvenienced the Repertory Theatre, but they considered it their duty to protest. The debate went on for a short time, the end of it being that Drinkwater informed the audience that the performance would continue and the protestors proclaimed that if it did

no one should hear it. This discussion was quaintly courteous on both sides, rather like the ceremonious preliminaries to a duel. The play proceeded and so did the noise. Before the curtain fell at the end of the play it had become a riot. The actors could not hear one another's words and missiles were thrown onto the stage. The very small body of police present could only stand by and see that no serious violence occurred. Fortunately no one was hurt, though when it was all over we collected from the stage a metal cigarette-case, two clasp-knives, a large quantity of pieces of plaster that had been torn off the walls, and other articles that had been thrown at the actors—with very bad aim, for no one had been hit.

A few members of the audience had withdrawn when it became evident that there was no chance of the actors being heard, but most of them remained until the end, and seemed to enjoy the excitement. The police recommended that the comedy should be discontinued, but as this would have been unjust to the play, and might have been construed as an admission that the theatre had made a mistake, it was run for the full week. No further disturbance occurred, but the incident itself and the subsequent newspaper correspondence were valuable advertisements for the theatre, with the result that there were full houses for each subsequent performance of *The Tinker's Wedding*.

A week of *You Never Can Tell* was followed by a revival of *The Farmer's Wife*, in connection with

which Mr. A. E. Drinkwater again came to Birmingham. During his visit he produced the next play, *Partnership*, by Miss Elizabeth Baker. *The Charity that Began at Home* and then a triple bill consisting of *X=O*, *The Cobbler's Shop*, and Gilbert Cannan's *James and John* carried the season to its last night, 23rd June.

Twenty-one fresh plays had been produced during the year, but only nine of them were long enough for an evening's entertainment, the remainder being one-act plays. Drinkwater had done most of the producing, with help from Frank Clewlow. The war having claimed Jackson, he was unable to give personal attention to the theatre, though he continued to send in designs and instructions, and kept himself informed of all that was being done.

*The Sixth Season*, 1917-18, started with a company of twelve :

Noel Shammon.	Miss Margaret Chatwin.
Joseph Dodd.	„ Cathleen Orford.
William J. Rea.	„ Mary Raby.
Alfred J. Brooks.	„ Maud Gill.
Oliver Johnston.	„ Dorothy Taylor.
Frank Moore.	„ Dorothy Massingham.

Frank Moore had already done a good deal of work with both 'The Pilgrims' and the Repertory Theatre, but did not definitely become a member of the Company until the beginning of this season. Miss Massingham replaced Miss Byrne, who had resigned, and Frank

Clewlow remained Stage Manager with H. V. Edwards as his assistant. The season opened on 1st September with *Lady Windermere's Fan*, which was succeeded by J. O. Francis's poignant Welsh tragedy *Change*. A revival of *The Cassilis Engagement* followed, and then came a new production—Arnold Bennett's *What the Public Wants*. *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Widowers' Houses*, *Over a Garden Wall*, and a triple bill carried the work on to the end of November. The triple bill was made up of Eden Phillpotts' *Hiatus*, Drinkwater's *Cophetua*, and Synge's *The Shadow of the Glen*. Miss Massingham had a breakdown in health at this time and had to take a few weeks' rest. Her place was taken temporarily by Miss Dorothy Green, who played The Beggar Maid in *Cophetua*, and, after a week of *The Tragedy of Nan*, Rose Trelawny in *Trelawny of the Wells*. This play was a great success, running for a fortnight to large audiences. *The Corsican Brothers*, our first and only attempt at popular melodrama, followed. It was not a success, either financially or otherwise, and the experiment has not been repeated. Another triple bill, which did not include any new plays, and *The Honeymoon*, completed the first half of the season. As attendances had always been at their worst on Monday evenings, during the autumn an effort was made to improve them by giving concerts on those nights instead of the usual performances. They were directed by Appleby Matthews, who arranged some

very good musical entertainments, but the results did not encourage us to continue them. The children's play for this Christmas was again *The Christmas Party*, and it ran every afternoon for seven weeks. The evening play was *Trelawny of the Wells*, which had proved the most popular production of the season. *Lady Windermere's Fan* followed, and then the first production in Birmingham of Miss Hamilton's *Just to Get Married*, which, attracting good audiences, was played for a second week ; but a triple bill consisting of Dunsany's *A Night at an Inn*, *The Death of Tintagiles*, and *Five Birds in a Cage* intervened. Then came the only Hankin play we had not produced—*The Last of the De Mullins*. *The Rogueries of Scapin*, Lady Gregory's version of Molière's comedy, took up the next fortnight, preceded during the first week by Miss Massingham's new play *Glass Houses*, and during the second by *The Storm*. A revival of *Partnership* gave breathing time, while *St. George and the Dragons*, a new Devonshire comedy by Eden Phillpotts, was produced under the direction of A. E. Drinkwater ; then followed *The Trojan Women*, in Gilbert Murray's translation. The Shakespeare Festival this April ran for four weeks, during which time *Measure for Measure*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Twelfth Night* were presented. The remainder of the season was filled by *The Silver Box*, *Cupid and the Styx*, *Dandy Dick*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Fourteen additional long plays were produced this

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season, and seven short ones, while about a dozen plays that had been presented in previous years were revived. The most important event of the year was the production of *The Trojan Women*, in many ways a most satisfying piece of stage work, but, as may be supposed, it created little public interest. War difficulties were now being felt acutely. Oliver Johnston left the theatre for the Army before Christmas, and Frank Moore in the early autumn, and it was only by constant appeals to military tribunals that the theatre was enabled to keep enough actors to continue the work. William Dexter and Christian Morrow were added to our depleted numbers, and, for a few weeks, Ernest Watts-Tye and Maurice Neville. The casts had to be filled up with local amateurs, some of whom were entirely without experience. The skilled workmen were also being taken away, and it was extremely difficult to find adequate substitutes.

*The Seventh Season*, 1918-19, opened nevertheless with a fairly full company consisting of

Noel Shammon.	Miss Margaret Chatwin.
Joseph Dodd.	„ Cathleen Orford.
William J. Rea.	„ Mary Raby.
Christian Morrow.	„ Maud Gill.
Arnold Ridley.	„ Dorothy Taylor.
Eric Ross.	„ Dorothy Massingham.
Arthur Claremont.	„ Sydney Leon.
Reginald Gatty.	
Adrian J. Byrne.	

Frank D. Clewlow, after five years of valuable service, resigned his position as Stage Manager before the season began, and was succeeded by A. E. Filmer, Edwards remaining as assistant. The first play was *Milestones*, and the second *The Pillars of Society*, and then came the last triple bill to be given in this theatre. It was an interesting one, made up of Conrad's *One Day More*, Monkhouse's *The Grand Cham's Diamond*, and Tchekov's *The Bear*, but this form of entertainment has seldom proved popular and has been discontinued here. *Just to Get Married* and *Milestones* were then revived to give time for rehearsals of the play that has caused more general interest than anything else we have ever done—Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln*. *Abraham Lincoln* was produced on 12th October, and had a wildly enthusiastic reception. It ran for a full month to crowded houses and was revived again within three weeks. Its extraordinary popularity was deserved, for the play has very great merits and it was presented with considerable skill. Drinkwater was his own producer, and he did more with it than any other producer could have done, while the actors gave their very best to it, because of their admiration for the work and their affection for its author. It was a sincere production of an intensely sincere play, and its success was well earned. The time, a few weeks before the end of the War, added to its impressiveness, and phrase after phrase struck home to the hearts of the audience

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with almost painful poignancy. It soon became obvious that such a play could not be kept for Birmingham only, and negotiations were at once set afoot for transferring it to London. By arrangement with Mr. Nigel Playfair it opened on 19th February 1919, at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, where it ran for four hundred and sixty-six performances. A second company took it on tour in October of the same year, finishing in December 1920. Its success in America is outside the scope of this history.

Before the company were transferred to Hammersmith they presented a few more plays in Birmingham—*Miss Robinson*, *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, with Miss Maire O'Neill as Deirdre, *Candida*, *Twelfth Night*, and for Christmas *Alice in Wonderland*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Then a serious break occurred in the history of the theatre, for not only did the actors go to London, but Drinkwater went with them, and as it afterwards turned out, he had finished his work here. Jackson had by this time resigned his commission in the Navy, and a temporary company was engaged to supplement the few actors who were retained. Those in Birmingham for the remainder of the season were

Christian Morrow.  
Arnold Ridley.  
Arthur Claremont.  
Reginald Gatty.  
Frank Moore.  
Stanley Drewitt.

Douglas Clarke-Smith.  
Osmund Willson.  
Wilfred Fletcher.  
Leslie Banks.  
Miss Alice Bowes.  
„ Mollie Maitland.

Early in March Miss Chatwin and Miss Massingham returned from London to increase the strength of the Birmingham company. Eric Messiter was appointed Stage Manager with Richard Wayne as his assistant. The first few productions were directed by Stanley Drewitt—*The Mollusc*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Gentlemen of the Press*, and *Everyman*. Jackson directed *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *The School for Scandal*, while Conal O'Riordan came to Birmingham to arrange a special production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. *The Honeymoon* was revived for a fortnight and the season terminated on 28th June.

Until February Drinkwater had continued to do most of the producing, but after that date, though he continued to act as General Manager for a few months longer, he was detained in London by the run of *Abraham Lincoln* until he went to America, and was therefore unable to assist any further in the affairs of this theatre. In addition to his skill as producer, actor, and dramatist, his discriminating taste, executive ability and attractive social qualities had been of the greatest possible value during the theatre's experimental years, and his loss was felt severely. Miss Orford, Rea, Dodd, Shammon, and Byrne were also greatly missed, when, on the termination of the Hammersmith season, they decided not to return to Birmingham.

The theatre had now been working for a little more

than six years and had achieved a considerable reputation. Naturally there had been mistakes, for there had to be trial and search for the right road. The War had added greatly to the difficulties, but it was now over, and with the knowledge gained by experience the theatre prepared to start on the second phase of its history.

## CHAPTER III

### A CHRONICLE, 1919-1924

**T**HE *Eighth Season*, 1919-20, opened on 30th August with a production of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, directed by Nigel Playfair. The stock company at this time consisted of

Christian Morrow.	Melville Cooper.
Arnold Ridley.	Oliver Crombie.
Arthur Claremont.	
Reginald Gatty.	Miss Margaret Chatwin.
Eric Messiter.	„ Maud Gill.
Frank Moore.	„ Sydney Leon.
E. Stuart Vinden.	„ Susan Richmond.
Oliver Johnston.	„ Phyllis Shand.

For this first production several additional actors were engaged, including Eric Davidson, Noel Coward, James Whale, Miss Betty Chester, and Miss Ann Desmond. Filmer came back to Birmingham as our first Stage Director, Messiter continuing as Stage Manager. Moore, Vinden, Johnston, and Cooper, old members of the company, had been released from the Army and now returned to the theatre. Miss Massingham had resigned at the end of the previous season, and her place was taken by Miss Richmond.

Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy, given in a setting representing the stage of an Elizabethan theatre, was bright and vigorous, similar to the same producer's presentation of the play shortly afterwards in London. It ran for two weeks, as most of the plays since this time have done. Up to the summer of 1919 we had usually given a play a week, but it was found practicable to increase the period to a fortnight, owing to the gradual growth of the audiences. The longer run caused less strain on the actors and made it possible to give more care to preparation, the performances improving in consequence. The next production was *The New Sin*, with which was played Dunsany's little fantasy *The Glittering Gate*, while *Arms and the Man*, *The Man from Blankley's*, and *The Cassilis Engagement* filled in the following six weeks. *The God of Gods*, the succeeding production, is the work of a young Canadian dramatist, Carroll Aikins. It had never been played before, but was selected from the large number of plays offered to the theatre as showing unusual ability in its author. The story is interesting and dramatic, and, dealing with American Indian life and legend, has a good deal of originality. All the characters, including the heroine, are redskins of a period when they were still untouched by the influence of Europeans. The dialogue is not everything that can be desired, but it is above the average of the work submitted to us by unknown dramatists, and its theatrical qualities called for stage presentation.

Although a tragedy it won immediate attention and sufficient success to warrant its revival during the following spring. Shakespeare occupied the theatre for the remaining five weeks before Christmas, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *As You Like It* being the plays produced. *Love's Labour's Lost* ran for three weeks to audiences whose appreciation made it difficult to understand why this dainty comedy of Shakespeare's youth is not seen on the stage more frequently. *The Christmas Party* was again the children's afternoon play for the holidays, with *The School for Scandal* at night. Felix Aylmer and Miss Cicely Byrne came back to us for the latter play, taking the parts of Joseph Surface and Lady Teazle. It was during the run of these plays that Paul Shelving, just released from the Army, became the theatre's designer and scenic artist. The value of his work in the subsequent development of the repertory movement in Birmingham has been very great, and he and Jackson have raised this theatre, so far as scenery is concerned, to a high place among the art theatres of the world. The first stage settings he made for us were those for *Arms and the Man*, and the background, used in both scenes, with its bold drawing and brilliant colouring was so unlike anything else that had been seen in this town that many of the audience were irritated by it, as well as astonished, on the ground that it was not true to nature.

After a fortnight of *The Return of the Prodigal*,

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*The Witch* was produced, the designs throughout—scenery, costumes, furniture, and properties—being Shelving's work, and any antagonism raised by his previous scheme was wiped out by immediate enthusiasm. It was characteristic of Shelving that when negotiations were first opened with him he accepted without hesitation the salary offered—that side of the business interested him only slightly—but he made it a condition that he should have the opportunity of designing without interference at least three plays every year. After his work in *The Witch* it was evident that not three but all the productions could be left in his hands, and, except for the few plays designed by Jackson, he has been responsible for every stage setting put on in this theatre since he came.

*The Witch* was a notable production in other respects. Filmer directed it with extraordinary insight and indefatigable care, and the cast was a good one, the actors being generally well suited in their parts, in some cases excellently. The play became a popular success, bringing into the theatre many who had not visited it before. It ran for three weeks and was revived twice before the end of the season, a record for a tragedy at this theatre. It was followed by a double bill made up of Molière's *George Dandin*, and Björnson's *The Newly Married Couple*, Jackson directing the former and Vinden the latter. Then came a number of revivals—*The Witch*, *A Woman of No Importance*, *The God of Gods*, and *Love's*



Photo: Lewis & Randall

"THE WITCH"; SCENE I

DESIGNED BY PAUL SHELING

The buildings and fences are a chill greenish-blue, the tree trunks various shades of purple, and the trees at the back are black and behind them an orange sky.



*Labour's Lost*. Early in May *Othello* was produced by Filmer, in a curtain setting with beautiful Shelving costumes. *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Return of the Prodigal*, and another revival of *The Witch* brought us again to the end of the dramatic season.

Its termination, however, did not conclude the work of the year. For a considerable time Jackson had wished to experiment with opera, but no favourable opportunity had occurred until this summer. He wanted to produce it in such a way that the two common faults in opera in England, inaudibility and staginess, should be avoided, and he thought he might do this with local singers who had no experience of the opera stage and its conventions. By careful selection and constant drilling he gathered a little company who enunciated words as clearly when singing as when speaking, and he taught them to act simply and naturally. With these he produced Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte* at the theatre immediately after the dramatic season finished. Appleby Matthews, who was deeply interested in the attempt, collected and rehearsed an orchestra, and acted as Musical Director of the production. The cast was as follows :

Isidora	.	.	Doris Watkins.
Dorabella	.	.	Helen Anderton.
Despina	.	.	Emily Broughton.
Ferrando	.	.	Henry J. Stone.
Gratiano	.	.	Herbert Simmonds.
Don Alfonso	.	.	Arthur Cranmer.

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Paul Smythe, on demobilization in February, had returned to the theatre, and Osmund Willson joined us at the same time. They filled up the places left vacant by Christian Morrow and Oliver Crombie, who terminated their engagements here before Christmas. Miss Susan Richmond and Miss Leon resigned at the end of the season, the former having accepted an offer from Liverpool's repertory theatre, the Playhouse. Fewer plays had been produced during the year owing to the lengthening of the average run, but some of them had been of notable interest—*The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Witch*, and *Othello*.

*For the Ninth Season, 1920-21*, the company was made up of

Reginald Gatty.	Miss Margaret Chatwin.
Frank Moore.	„ Phyllis Shand.
E. Stuart Vinden.	„ Mary Raby.
Oliver Johnston.	„ Dorothy Taylor.
Melville Cooper.	„ May Kendal.
Paul Smythe.	„ Faith Faber.
Eric Messiter.	
Osmund Willson.	
Frank Snell.	

Miss Gill and Gerald Saffery were Associate Stage Managers, Filmer still being Stage Director. It was during this season that Cyril Phillips, the present General Manager, first entered the management as assistant.

The opening play, *The Potter's Shop*, was written

by L. P. Brown, a young Birmingham dramatist. It is a comedy of Persia of the time of Omar Khayyam, and while having good qualities just misses being a good play as a whole. The colours of the scenery and dresses were kaleidoscopic in their brilliance, Shelving having taken full advantage of the Eastern setting. *The Cleansing Stain*, a melodrama by Echegary, was a failure from the box office standpoint, as was Vanbrugh's *The Confederacy*. *Don, Arms and the Man*, and the first part of *Henry IV.* were the other plays given before Christmas. For the holidays *The Cockyolly Bird* was offered to children in the afternoons and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* to the evening audience. It was during the run of these two plays that the first, and I hope last, fire occurred in the theatre. Fortunately the building was vacant, except for the night watchman, as it happened at about 11.45 at night. I had left the theatre about half an hour earlier, at which time there was no evidence of there being anything wrong. The first indication to the watchman was the sounding of the fire gong, started by the flow of water when the automatic sprinklers come into operation. He made an examination and found the stage full of smoke, but the sprinklers had already extinguished the conflagration. When I returned to the theatre, about midnight, the fire brigade was still engaged, but all real danger was past. The fire damage was not very serious, the only property of value destroyed being the

velvet tableau-curtains and the large silk screens which form part of the lighting system. The injury done by water was more serious, the switchboard and electrical plant generally being badly damaged. The basement, in which the administrative offices are situated, was flooded to a depth of some six or eight inches, and carpets, documents, etc., were floating about. Filmer arrived on the scene shortly after I did, and together we went out in the early hours to call up a working staff. By four o'clock the work of cleaning up was well in hand, and by mid-day temporary arrangements had been made for the afternoon performance. It was an uncomfortable matinée, the stage being wet and slippery, and the lights uncertain. For several weeks electrical troubles occurred at frequent intervals, and the installation remained untrustworthy until the whole of it had been examined and a great deal renewed, the work not being completed until late in the spring.

The Christmas plays were followed by *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Change*, both of which had been presented before, the former many times. Then came Sierra's delightful comedy *The Romantic Young Lady*, one of the most satisfying productions ever given here. It was preceded at each performance by Ferguson's little tragedy *Campbell of Kilmhor*. Shaw's *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* was played next, and then, arrangements having been made for the temporary re-engagement of Miss Richmond, a fortnight of

*The Witch* followed. *Thérèse Raquin*, a rather lurid production, ran for a week only, and the succeeding fortnight was given over to Shakespeare, both parts of *Henry IV.* being presented. On the birthday Part I. was played in the afternoon and Part II. at night, a feat unique in the history of the theatre. The last plays of the dramatic season were *The Romantic Young Lady* (preceded by *The Mask*), *Hedda Gabler*, *Don*, and *The Voysey Inheritance*. The most interesting productions of the year had been *The Confederacy* and *The Romantic Young Lady*, directed by Filmer, and the two parts of *Henry IV.* under Jackson's supervision. Altogether twelve additions had been made to our repertoire, including the two one-act plays, *Campbell* and *The Mask*. Three more operas were produced during the summer, Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto*, Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* and Boughton's *The Immortal Hour*, and two performances were given of *Così Fan Tutte*. They were all directed by Jackson and Appleby Matthews again had charge of the music. *Don Pasquale* was played as a puppet show, the actors being extravagantly dressed and moving with the stiffness of automata, the artificiality of the opera seeming to demand such treatment.

*The Immortal Hour* is now known everywhere. Selections are sung at concerts, and impressed on gramophone records. Before Jackson produced it in Birmingham it had been presented by the composer in

Glastonbury, London, and a few other places, but there had been no opportunity of making it generally known by an extended run, and little interest was aroused by its first production in Birmingham until the last few performances. But Jackson believed that it would eventually succeed, and he has revived it three times, giving forty-two performances in all. At the last revival the attendances were excellent, many people being unable to obtain admission. On 14th October Jackson put it on at the Regent Theatre, London, and again on 17th November of the following year. Altogether four hundred and twenty-one performances of this beautiful music-drama have been given by this company. When arrangements were being made for the first Birmingham production the composer recommended that Miss Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies should be invited to sing the part of Etain, a part she had already sung at one or more of his own presentations of the work. This was done, and she was subsequently offered a position in the permanent acting company. Since then she has taken part in most of the productions here except during the two periods when *The Immortal Hour* was being played in London. The original Birmingham cast of *The Immortal Hour* was as follows :

Eochaidh	.	.	Herbert Simmonds.
Etain	.	.	Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies.
Midir	.	.	Tom Goodey.
Dalua	.	.	Arthur Cranmer.

Manus . . .	Paul Smythe.
Maive . . .	Margaret Chatwin.
Old Bard . . .	William Bennett.
Spirit Voice . . .	Annette Ainsworth.

At the end of the season the theatre lost two of its oldest actors, for Frank Moore had been connected with the movement since the day of 'The Pilgrim Players,' and E. Stuart Vinden was one of the original company engaged in 1913. Both had remained with the theatre ever since, except for intervals while on military service, but Moore now resigned to go abroad, and Vinden to take up the position of producer at the Liverpool 'Playhouse.' Unfortunately illness prevented his so doing, and up to the present he has not been able to return to the stage, though he still remains connected with us as Reader of Plays. Miss Raby also resigned, having accepted an engagement in London.

*The Tenth Season, 1921-22.*—The company for this season consisted of

Reginald Gatty.	Colin Keith-Johnston.
Oliver Johnston.	Robert Newton.
Melville Cooper.	Miss Margaret Chatwin.
Paul Smythe.	„ Phyllis Shand.
Eric Messiter.	„ Dorothy Taylor.
Osmund Willson.	„ May Kendal.
Grosvenor North.	„ Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies.

Until Christmas Filmer continued directing performances with Miss Gill and Gerald Saffery as Stage Managers. The season began on 3rd September

with a very successful production of *Quality Street*, afterwards revived for a five weeks' run at the end of the year. Shaw's *Getting Married* followed and also proved popular, and these, together with a week of *The Cassilis Engagement*, brought in five weeks' business that appeared to promise a profitable year. The promise, unfortunately, was not maintained, although the next play, *The Would-be Gentleman*, did not fall off very much. Ozell's eighteenth-century version of this play was used and it was given in its entirety, including the ballet in Act iv. to the original music by Lully. Jackson directed this production, and Shelving's designs for it are among his best. A double bill was then presented, and it was this that proved the unreliability of the promise of the first weeks. The plays were D'Annunzio's *The Dream of a Spring Morning* and Sierra's *The Two Shepherds*, both of them, especially the latter, excellently produced and acted. It was in this play that H. K. Ayloff, the present Stage Director, made his first appearance in this theatre, in the character of *Don Antonio*, the old priest. *Thérèse Raquin*, *Getting Married*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *The Romantic Young Lady* were revived for a week each through November, and the first week in December was spent at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester, where the same four plays were given. While the company was away *Don Pasquale* and *Così Fan Tutte* occupied the Birmingham stage. This year's Christmas fare was

*Quality Street* and Planché's forgotten fairy play *The King of the Peacocks*, both of them running until 21st January. A week later part of the company began a five months' tour, visiting the chief towns in England as well as a few in Scotland and Ireland, the plays presented being those already given at Manchester. Filmer, exhausted by overwork, had six months' leave of absence and Ayliff temporarily took his place. Not all the actors were sent on tour, a few being retained in Birmingham, and to these certain additions were made, the home company for the remainder of the season being constituted as follows :

Reginald Gatty.	Miss Maud Gill.
Colin Keith-Johnston.	„ Phyllis Shand.
Robert Newton.	„ Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies.
Scott Sunderland.	„ Susan Richmond.
Cedric Hardwicke.	
Wallace Evennett.	
George Merritt.	

From time to time, as required, other engagements were made during these six months, including Miss Marie Housley, Ion Swinley, and William J. Rea. *Candida* was the first play under the new arrangements, with *The Polar Post* as curtain-raiser. Then after a revival of *The Immortal Hour* came *Ghosts*, *The Rivals*, and *The New Morality*. This last, an amusing comedy by Harold Chapin, won instant popularity, justifying the forty-two performances that have been given of it in Birmingham, besides others on tour. It was

preceded by a little ballet, *The Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweep*, arranged to Scarlatti's music by Leighton Lucas, a young musician and dancer who joined us at this time. He was also responsible for *The Pierrot of the Minute* and *L'Enfant Prodigue*, produced later. Heywood's domestic tragedy *A Woman Killed with Kindness* followed, but its reception was not such as to encourage further performances of the great Elizabethan masterpieces. *The Rivals*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Immortal Hour*, and *The New Morality* were repeated, and then came another new and beautiful production—*Romeo and Juliet*. In many respects this was similar to that afterwards given at the Regent Theatre, but with a number of changes in the cast and differences in the scenery, the Birmingham stage being much smaller than that of the London theatre. Chapin's *The Marriage of Columbine* was the last play of the dramatic season, which terminated on 24th June.

Only one fresh opera was presented this summer, *Don Giovanni*, produced by Ayliff. *Così fan Tutte* was repeated and Lucas arranged performances of André Carré's wordless play *L'Enfant Prodigue*.

The year had been an unusually busy one, four hundred and seventy-three performances having been given in Birmingham and on tour between 3rd September and 16th July. Sixteen long and six short plays, as well as seven operas and ballets, had been presented. In addition to the usual

performances here and the work of the touring company, *The Interlude of Youth*, *The Mock Doctor*, and scenes from *Twelfth Night* had been given at halls in some of the small towns and villages in the Midlands by members of the company not required at the theatre in the current play. In April Jackson had started a School of Opera, with the intention of training local singers for his own productions, particularly for chorus work. Reginald Gatty was put in control, with Miss Lilian Green as assistant and Lucas as teacher of dancing. The financial loss on it was heavy, and it was severed from the theatre in July of the following year, though Gatty continues it as a personal venture.

The tour met with fair success. It started at Westcliffe on 28th January and finished at Bristol on 29th June. Arrangements for it were made by A. E. Drinkwater, and Phillips travelled with the company as Manager and Saffery as Stage Manager. Considerable anxiety was caused by the disturbed state of Ireland during the time they were in that country, but except that the visit to one town had to be cancelled, no serious difficulties were encountered. The company had been out only a few weeks when Oliver Johnston was released, he having received a very advantageous offer from another management, and for the remainder of the tour his place was taken by Frederick Burtwell.

*The Eleventh Season*, 1922-23, commenced on 2nd

## 96 BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE

September with a production of *The Admirable Crichton*, directed by Filmer, who had by this time returned to his duties. The actors were

Melville Cooper.	Cedric Hardwicke.
Paul Smythe.	Wallace Evennett.
Eric Messiter.	Miss Margaret Chatwin.
Osmund Willson.	„ Maud Gill.
Grosvenor North.	„ Phyllis Shand.
Colin Keith-Johnston.	„ Dorothy Taylor.
Robert Newton.	„ Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies.

The first play was followed by *Milestones* and Galsworthy's *The Foundations*, the latter being preceded at each performance by *The Pierrot of the Minute*. At this time Jackson took over the Regent Theatre at King's Cross, London, and presented *The Immortal Hour* there on 14th October. Miss Ffrangcon-Davies and Miss Chatwin, being required in the opera, had to leave Birmingham, and temporary arrangements were made from time to time for filling their places, Miss Phyllis Relph and Miss Marie Housley both coming to us for *The Secret Woman*. This tragedy by Eden Phillpotts had been banned by the Censor when H. Granville-Barker originally prepared it for production, but we succeeded in getting it licensed and gave the first public performances of it on 14th October. A revival of *The Admirable Crichton* followed and the next week the company presented the same play at Oxford, the Birmingham theatre

being occupied by a visiting company controlled by A. E. Filmer and playing Shaw's *Misalliance*. On the return of our own company, *The Rivals* was revived while *The Shoemaker's Holiday* was being rehearsed. The excellent presentation of Dekker's fine old comedy was fairly popular, but much less so than the modern comedy which succeeded it, *Advertising April*, a new play submitted to the theatre in typescript, and accepted before the printed edition appeared. It was played for a fortnight to delighted audiences, and we were greatly amused, when it was on tour, to receive a demand from the manager in one of the smaller towns that the text should be 'bowdlerized' lest it should corrupt the morals of his patrons. The 'hells' and 'damns' are certainly scattered rather freely, but they are used quite naturally and are in no way offensive. *The Admirable Crichton* was revived as the Christmas play, with *The Christmas Party* for matinées. These were the last plays that Filmer directed, his engagement terminating at the end of the year. He had done very valuable work for the theatre in raising the standard of the productions, each one for which he was responsible being finished and polished to the highest degree possible under repertory theatre conditions. He was succeeded by H. K. Ayloff, who still remains Stage Director, and who has splendidly maintained the standard already set, and with untiring energy directed a series of productions of great merit.

## 98 BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE

Another tour was arranged for the spring, and, additional actors being engaged, the company was divided into two parts.

<i>For Birmingham.</i>	<i>For Tour.</i>
Melville Cooper.	Eric Messiter.
Paul Smythe.	Grosvenor North.
Colin Keith-Johnston.	Robert Newton.
Cedric Hardwicke.	Clifford Marquand.
Wallace Evennett.	Arthur Statham.
Scott Sunderland.	Miss Yvette Pienne.
John Longden.	„ Joyce Corfield.
Charles Hordern.	„ Frances Doble.
Miss Phyllis Shand.	„ Elsie Pain.
„ Eileen Beldon.	„ Elsie Irving.
„ Evelyn Hope.	„ Lilian Mason.

Miss Taylor resigned at this time on account of ill-health and Newton left before the tour finished, his place being taken by Percy Robinson. Alan Bland went out as Acting Manager, Saffery again being responsible for the stage management. Miss Gill was Stage Manager for the 'home' company with Raymond Huntley and Hedley Briggs as her assistants. The tour did not begin until 19th February, and prior to setting out the actors about to travel gave performances of three of the plays they were to present in other towns—*The Romantic Age*, *The Return of the Prodigal*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, together with two short plays, *High Tea* and *Everybody's*

*Husband*. While they were presenting these the 'home company' was preparing, for the theatre's tenth anniversary, a revival of *Abraham Lincoln*. Jackson wished to have the original actors in the parts of Lincoln and Mrs. Lincoln, but only Miss Raby was able to accept the invitation, William J. Rea being otherwise engaged, and the 'lead' was played by Cyprian Matthews, who was familiar with the part, having acted it on tour. Drinkwater came down for the final rehearsals. Except for this revival of our most successful play, the anniversary was not celebrated in any way, the unremitting demands made by the constant succession of plays precluding anything in the nature of festivities or social functions. A very satisfactory production of that most difficult play *Heartbreak House* followed. I think that it gained by being played rather fast, the longest time taken at any performance being three hours, including two intervals of ten minutes each. *The Farmer's Wife* was next revived. Not having been put on the stage since it was given here in 1916, the cast, except for Miss Thornton, was entirely changed. It had been hoped that A. E. Drinkwater, who was looking after our business at the Regent Theatre, would come down to produce it, but on 27th January the sad news came through that he had died quite suddenly that afternoon. In him the theatre lost a valued friend as well as a wise and helpful adviser, widely experienced in all matters relating to the stage. Phillips had to go to the Regent

to look after London affairs, and Ayliff rehearsed *The Farmer's Wife*, producing it on the lines laid down by its first producer. During the week following this play we had undertaken to present *The Admirable Crichton* at Oxford. The touring company was not large enough to fill all the parts, and a number of the Birmingham actors had to join them. This left us with a depleted company at home, and it was essential that we should produce a play requiring a very small cast. Adolf Paul's *The Language of the Birds* was selected, as it has only three important characters and two others who have a few lines each, the remainder having nothing whatever to say. Ayliff himself played King Solomon as well as directing the performance, a duplication of duties that should be avoided, but for which in this instance there was no help. The result was less satisfactory than usual, though the play was very beautiful to look at and had fine moments. *Heartbreak House* was then revived, giving additional time for rehearsals of the next play, *Cymbeline*. While mixing together ancient Britain, Renaissance Italy, and Elizabethan England in the same play, Shakespeare has given to it a curiously modern atmosphere and psychology, and Jackson decided that it should be produced as a drama of the present day. The announcement of this decision caused a good deal of interest all over the country, but most people seemed to regard it as an amusing freak, although it was really a quite sincere attempt to add to the play's



Photo: Geo. Dawson.

"CYMBELINE" (IN MODERN DRESS)

*Cymbeline receiving the Roman Ambassador.*

PRODUCED BY H. K. AYLIFF



intensity. Generally the press was cheaply facetious, the favourite slogan being 'Shakespeare in plus-fours.' The dressing was done with as much care as in the case of romantic costume, and much thought was given to it. In the early scenes ordinary morning dress was worn, except by the King, who appeared in all the glory of an English Field-Marshal's uniform. The wager scene was a modern dinner-party, Iachimo and his companions being in evening dress. Caius Lucius, in the uniform of an Italian ambassador, was received by Cymbeline and the Queen in state robes, Cloten being dressed as a lieutenant of the Guards, and the lords in court dress. Imogen in disguise looked like a schoolboy, in knickerbockers and a cap, and the lost princes like simple-lifers in flannel shirts and shorts. The stage was darkened for the battle, which opened with the roar of artillery and the crackle of rifles, flashes from bursting shells revealing soldiers in khaki and steel helmets firing over an earthwork behind which they crouched until the bayonet charge of the Bersaglieri with their waving plumes. The whole production was very realistic, and in some scenes extraordinarily vivid, the bedroom and wager scenes being the most successful. Cloten's head was a difficulty and always raised a laugh, and references to swords were occasionally awkward. On the whole the experiment was interesting, and should be tried with other plays. The actors in some cases were by no means at their best, being embarrassed,

apparently, by the unusual combination of blank verse and realistic acting, and in no Shakespeare play produced here has faulty enunciation been so obvious.

It was followed by another week of *The Farmer's Wife*, and then Jackson produced *The Duenna*. The revival of Sheridan's long-neglected ballad-opera aroused very little interest, although it is as delightful a piece of work as *The Beggar's Opera*, and the newspapers did their best for it. Jackson's production was charming and some of the parts were excellently played. There was certainly room for improvement in the singing, as was to be expected in a musical work given by the acting members of the company, only one of whom was a trained musician. But all could sing more or less, some of the voices being decidedly good, and it was certainly acted much better than it would have been if the parts had been played by singers. *The Duenna* ran for a week only and was followed by Drinkwater's *Mary Stuart*. This appealed to a much wider public, and a couple of weeks' good business was done with it. *Mary Stuart* terminated the dramatic season, which was followed by a fortnight of opera. Correspondence with Dame Ethel Smyth about her new opera *Fête Galante* and the already familiar *Boatswain's Mate* had started in the previous November. After an enormous number of letters had been received and despatched, and several interviews, arrangements were completed. We engaged the company that had produced the '*Boatswain*' at the 'Old Vic'

to revive it in Birmingham, and on each evening it was preceded by *Fête Galante*, produced by Barry Jackson and sung by artistes engaged from Birmingham. *Fête Galante*, a tragic little romance of Pierrot's love for the Queen, is founded on a story by Maurice Baring and turned into verse by Edward Shanks. Dame Ethel was present at the last week of rehearsals and conducted the first three performances, after which Appleby Matthews took charge of the music.

*The Twelfth Season, 1923-24.*—While the theatre was given over to opera and for the following fortnight, the ordinary acting company took its annual vacation, but, for the first time in its history, the theatre did not close for the summer. The touring company returned to Birmingham on the 17th June and gave performances of plays in its repertoire until the 21st July, by which time the home company had prepared *The Professor's Love Story*. This was the third of Sir James Barrie's comedies given by us. The company in Birmingham now consisted of the following :—

Hedley Briggs.	Scott Sunderland.
Melville Cooper.	Osmund Willson.
Wallace Evennett.	Miss Eileen Beldon.
Cedric Hardwicke.	„ Margaret Chatwin.
Charles Hordern.	„ Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies.
Raymond Huntley.	„ Frances Doble.
Colin Keith-Johnston.	„ Maud Gill.
Eric Messiter.	„ Phyllis Shand.
Paul Smythe.	„ Isabel Thornton.

Frank Moore, after having spent two years in Australia, joined us during the following month.

After *The Professor* came a series of revivals—*The Cassilis Engagement*, *The New Morality*, and *The Farmer's Wife*. *The New Morality* was preceded by Andreyev's amusing little satire *The Dear Departing*. There are twenty-six characters in this half-hour play all crowded onto the stage at once. Tourists, photographers, policemen, journalists, café waiters, Salvation Army soldiers and others wait outside a café in the Alps to see an unfortunate climber drop from an apparently inaccessible position where he is clinging. The play is merely the conversation of these sightseers. The English tourists bet on the length of time he can hang there, the Russian father draws moral lessons from the incident for the benefit of his children, and the clergyman and the Salvation Army quarrel as to which shall shout religious consolation to the unhappy stranger. Meanwhile, the café has developed a most profitable business. No one is really concerned about the man himself, but only interested in the matter as an unusual excitement. When it finally turns out that it is all an advertising trick of the café proprietor, every one is filled with disappointment and disgust. We treated the whole idea farcically. The Russian family were turned into German tourists copied from French caricatures, and the English tourists wore the plussest of plus-fours. The scene represented a rocky place at the foot of a

cliff whose top was invisible, and over the weirdest of rocks filling up nearly all the stage the actors had to climb as they ceaselessly moved about. In attempting a rescue the police had rigged up a piece of fantastic apparatus, consisting of ladders, poles, and ropes, that would have delighted Heath Robinson. Perhaps the whole thing was a little too wild and boisterous, or perhaps the satire was too cruel. Whatever the reason may have been, the play was not generally liked.

All our plays since *Mary Stuart* in May had been of a lighter type and most of them revivals. This fact elicited in the *Evening Despatch* a three-quarter column inquiry 'Is the "Rep" Maintaining its Reputation?' The writer suggested that we were becoming content to rest on our laurels and to do the work that was easiest. It was an amusing fact that, while one local paper was blaming us for being too frivolous, letters were appearing in a contemporary concerning our 'highbrow' tendencies. A glance back at the preceding twelve months will show, however, that there had been no falling off. The eighteen plays of the year included *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, *The Language of the Birds*, *Cymbeline*, *Heart-break House*, *Abraham Lincoln*, *Mary Stuart*, *The Secret Woman*, *Foundations*, and *The Duenna*. The other nine were quite good examples of English comedy. Six out of the nine plays named above did very little business, and in some cases we played to

almost empty houses. There happened to be a fairly long succession of light comedies, but for a very good reason : we were preparing the biggest thing we had yet attempted. Even actors and producers are subject to the effects of overwork, and the energies of all were being reserved for our October programme. When in March Mr. Bernard Shaw expressed his satisfaction with our production of *Heartbreak House*, Jackson asked his permission to give a few performances of *Back to Methuselah* in the autumn. Mr. Shaw's characteristic reply at the time was—' Mr. Jackson, are your wife and children provided for ? ' However, he gave us leave to do it, and as soon as the summer vacation was over rehearsals began. Ayliff had started working on the play long before, and so had Paul Shelving, for he had eight scenes to design and scores of costumes, and these designs had to be ready early enough for the carpenters, painters and dressmakers to carry them out. It was a frantic rush, but we were all too excited to be worried by it. Special booking arrangements which worked very smoothly were contrived by Phillips, the General Manager. Only a booking clerk knows the perplexities of a box office. Half the people who come to book appear not to know what the play is, or when it begins, or to what performance they want to come, or which seats they want, and when at last they have taken their tickets and gone away, they come back to say it was an afternoon performance they wanted and



Photo: Geo. Dawson

## “ BACK TO METHUSELAH ”

### PART I: THE GARDEN OF EDEN

DESIGNED BY PAUL SHELING

Blues and greens predominate in this scene. The trunk of the tree round which an emerald serpent is coiled is mustard yellow; the rock in the foreground is purple, the sky lemon yellow.



not an evening one. Some will change tickets several times until the clerk refuses to change them again, and then they complain to the management that they have been grossly insulted. Booking clerks need extraordinary patience. When at a box office one gets apparently curt treatment, it is charitable to remember that the clerk has been doing his best to please people who don't know what they want, perhaps for a good many hours, and in such circumstances nerves are apt to get frayed. For *Back to Methuselah* the booking difficulties were greatly increased, as each person had to book for five performances spread over a period of three weeks, but I think we managed to satisfy all except those who delayed until too late.

Rehearsals of the five parts occupied a little under eight weeks, and the same actors who were preparing *Methuselah* were acting in other plays at night. No player appeared in more than three out of the five parts, and most of them in only two. The producer's task was therefore the most exacting, for he alone had the whole five parts to rehearse.

An amusing difficulty occurred when the play was sent to the Lord Chamberlain's office. I regarded it as one play in eight acts, but the Reader of Plays considered that it consisted of one three-act play, one two-act play, and three one-act plays, and that reading fees should be paid accordingly. After a friendly correspondence a compromise was agreed upon, but

it is still unsettled whether officially *Back to Methuselah* is one play or a series of plays. However, it was licensed, only one short passage being objected to, and Mr. Shaw consented to this being omitted in performance. The only other stipulations made were that Adam and Eve should not appear with the traditional absence of costume, and that Burge and Lubin should not be made up to resemble any living personages. To these stipulations we agreed the more readily as they were in accordance with our original intentions.

In addition to the whole of our own company, for this production we engaged Miss Edith Evans, Miss Evelyn Hope, Miss Yvette Pienne, and Miss Louise de Lacy, as well as dancers, flute-players, and other instrumentalists. There were rehearsals in the morning, afternoon and, for those not engaged in the current play, in the evening as well, Mr. Shaw coming down for the week of dress rehearsals, as well as for the first cycle of performances. His arrival was looked forward to with terror by the company, but they soon learned that their anxiety was needless. No one could have been more appreciative of sincere effort or more critically helpful. The press was, of course, determined to interview the author before the production and we were equally determined that it should not. We won. In spite of this, there was a very large amount of preliminary publicity. Great interest was taken in our experiment all over the country, and

applications for seats came in rapidly, many of them from places at long distances. Naturally, most of the bookings were from Birmingham and district, but considering the unusual interest of the play, and that there were to be only four complete performances or 'cycles,' Birmingham did not respond as it should have done. There were empty seats at most of the performances and for some of them the theatre was not more than two-thirds filled. The amount of space given to advance notices in the press was generous, and we advertised more freely than usual, so it was hardly possible that the production would remain unknown anywhere in England.

With an average of twenty first nights per year, we are much more used to these exciting events than most companies, but they never cease to be exciting, and five in one week is extraordinary, even in a repertory theatre. All the actors desired to give performances that were worthy of the great play, and nerves were strung as tensely as possible. This had its effect on the work, for the company as a whole never acted better, and the atmosphere of the auditorium was as electrical as that of the stage. To witness, at performance after performance, the unfolding of the five parts was an amazing spiritual experience. One well-known critic, in his endeavour to find the right adjective, described it as 'invigorating, devastating, desolating, fascinating.' The culminating effect was tremendous when Lilith, a dimly lit white figure

on a darkened stage, spoke the last wonderful confession of faith :

‘Of Life only is there no end ; and though of its million starry mansions many are empty and many still unbuilt, and though its vast domain is as yet unbearably desert, my seed shall one day fill it and master its matter to its uttermost confines. And for what may be beyond the eyesight of Lilith is too short. It is enough that there is a beyond.’

As the stage faded out into complete darkness and the curtain descended, there was, for a moment, absolute silence. Then came a roar of applause, and the curtain rose again showing the great author surrounded by the players. In response to prolonged cheering Mr. Shaw spoke, his speech including the following passages :

‘I know my place as an author, and the place of the author is not on the stage.

‘That belongs really to the artistes who give life to the creations of the author, and are the real life of the play.

‘I have had the luxury of seeing my own play, which only existed until they took it and made it live.

‘I should like to ask one question, and that is whether, apart from a few personal friends of mine, there are any inhabitants of Birmingham in this house ?

‘This has been the most extraordinary experience of my life. I have had five magnificent performances in four days, and, what is more extraordinary, this has been done in Birmingham.

‘I remember Birmingham when it was, dramatically

and theatrically, the most impossible place in the world for work of this description.

‘That is why I ask—Are you all pilgrims or strangers here, or are there one or two genuine inhabitants of Birmingham?’

‘It is astonishing to me that this, perhaps the crown and climax of my career as a dramatic author, has been seen in Birmingham.’

‘I suppose Mr. Barry Jackson must be a changeling, or is it that there is occurring in Birmingham some change such as that in this play?’

‘The first two of the people who live 300 years, are people who never imagined it would be possible, and people whose friends never imagined it would happen to them.’

‘Their surprise can be compared to my experience, for Birmingham, the last place in the world one would imagine to become the centre of dramatic art, has produced a play of an intensity I think unparalleled.’

‘Without the co-operation of the audience such a feat would have been impossible.’<sup>1</sup>

Another revival of *The Immortal Hour* followed the Shaw Festival, this being preliminary to its revival in London a week later. Chesterton’s fantasy, *Magic*, came next, but as it is too short for a full evening’s entertainment it was preceded during the first week by *The Storm*, during the second week by Miss Lillah McCarthy in scenes from *Twelfth Night*, and during the third by *Campbell of Kilmhor*. The run of three weeks was not justified by the business done, but

<sup>1</sup> As reported in the *Birmingham Gazette*, 13th October 1923.

extra time was necessary for the next, and last, big production, Kaiser's expressionist play, *Gas*. *Gas* had been in our thoughts for a long time. It and *Back to Methuselah* were to be the two great events of the year, one might almost say of the theatre's history. No play had been prepared with more loving care, or looked forward to with more excitement. It was a wonderful production in every way, and it fell absolutely flat. Birmingham, with more than a million inhabitants, had only fifteen hundred who were sufficiently interested in the first English production of one of the most stimulating plays of modern times to take the trouble to see it. The average attendance in the whole house for the fortnight of this play was one hundred and nine, fewer than those engaged in the performance and the business of the theatre. One night only forty-seven were present and on several nights less than seventy. It was the last straw. For a long time Jackson had been disappointed with the result of his efforts, and he now decided that, the struggle being hopeless in this town, his only course was to transfer his energies to another. For a few more weeks performances dragged on, but the heart had gone out of us. *Gas* was followed by *Diplomacy*, and *Diplomacy* by *The Farmer's Wife*, which ran until the closing of the theatre on 9th February. At Christmas a children's play was, as usual, given in the afternoons, *Wee Men*, a new play by Brenda Girvin and Monica Cosens, with music



Photo: Geo. Dawson

**"GAS": THE GATES OF THE FACTORY**  
DESIGNED BY PAUL SHELIVING

*This scene is carried out entirely in black, white and several shades of grey.*



by Rutland Boughton, being selected. Nothing was known publicly of the coming cessation of the work until the last week of January, and when it was announced there was a storm of protest. In eleven years Birmingham has become proud of its Repertory Theatre, even though it does not support it, and besides the few who really would miss its intellectual stimulus there are many who recognize that it gives to the city a distinction and a dignity which it cannot afford to lose.

The Birmingham Civic Society at once took action, and with the help of other local organizations inaugurated an appeal to Jackson to carry on his work. There were crowded audiences all through the last two weeks, and at the final performance on 9th February the prolonged applause seemed as if it would never cease. When at last it came to an end the Lord Mayor introduced a scheme, afterwards more fully outlined by Sir Gilbert Barling, the Chairman of the Civic Society, for guaranteeing an audience for the theatre if Jackson would consent to re-open it. Consideration of the matter was promised, and after further applause and many presentations to the actors the curtain was rung down on the saddest night of the theatre's history. The next day the company was transferred to the Royal Court Theatre, London, which was opened on 18th February 1924, with *Back to Methuselah*. After four cycles of that play had been presented to large audiences it was followed on March 11th by *The Farmer's Wife*, which at the

time of writing is still running. At the Regent Theatre the run of *The Immortal Hour* was interrupted to allow of the performance during the Christmas season of Rutland Boughton's *Bethlehem*, forty-five performances being given. On its withdrawal the run of *The Immortal Hour* was continued until 17th May, when it was followed by *Romeo and Juliet*, which ran until the termination of Jackson's tenancy of the Regent in the middle of July.

In the meantime the movement started by the Civic Society for the re-opening of the theatre in Birmingham was developing. An Organizing Committee representing the principal societies and clubs of the city had been formed, and it obtained an undertaking from Jackson that he would start again in the following September if approximately four thousand people would promise to attend the theatre once a fortnight for three months, and guarantee their promises by paying for six tickets at a reduced rate before the end of June. The required number had not been reached when that time came, and the period was extended to 19th July, by which date the results of the work of the Organizing Committee and its energetic Honorary Secretary, Mr. William Haywood, were so satisfactory that Jackson then decided to continue his activities here, and the Theatre was re-opened, after a seven-months interval, on 27th September. May Birmingham never again give cause for the closing of its doors.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE WORK

WITH the building the architect, Mr. S. N. Cooke, deals in Chapter VI, so all I need add here is a few notes on its suitability for our purposes. The auditorium is too small to hold an audience of sufficient size to make the work profitable at the prices we should like to charge, but with present prices, which cannot be regarded as excessive, it is quite a business possibility. Some of the work we have been doing would lose in delicacy and finish in a larger theatre, for it is obvious that plays produced in an intimate theatre will appear very different in a more spacious one. Here no seat is more than seventy feet from the stage, and all those on the ground floor are within fifty feet. The acoustic properties are excellent. Each part of the house, stalls and balcony, has its own foyer, where the audience can meet in the intervals. On the foyer walls exhibitions of pictures are held, and changed from time to time. These are generally 'one-man shows' lasting for two months. Printed catalogues with notes are provided without charge. There have been twenty-five of these exhibitions, and the exhibitors include Laura Knight, Sylvia Gosse, William Rothenstein,

E. M. Kauffer, Joseph Southall, Lovat Fraser, Paul and John Nash, Arthur Gaskin, Eric Kennington, Randolph Schwabe, Rupert Lee, Ethelbert White, and Robert Gibbings.

Experience has shown that a stage of the size of ours is sufficient for work we want to do. It is but rarely that a play needs one larger, and when it does, the effect of spaciousness can be obtained by the skilful designing of the settings. In giving an effect of distance, the 'Heaven' is of great value. There are times when it is in the way; interior settings could be made deeper if it were removed, but its advantages far outweigh its disadvantages. Very beautiful effects can be obtained with its help, at comparatively small cost, and the economy in labour when changing sets is obvious. A more serious difficulty than the small stage is lack of space in the wings. Scenery cannot be kept here for more than the current play, and if this requires more than three full sets, some of it has to be moved through the street to and from the adjoining stores while the performance is in progress. Two sets packed and one set standing is all the stage will hold, though of course any reasonable number of cloths can be used and 'flyed' when not wanted. Very few plays need more than this, so the difficulty is more apparent than real. A small property-room adjoins the stage; it has generally proved sufficient to accommodate the furniture for the current play, though the presence of a grand piano, or other

such large piece, is sometimes embarrassing. At the side of the stage, above the foyer and cloakrooms, are the dressing-rooms, five on the first floor and five on the second. The first-floor rooms are apportioned to the ladies, and those on the floor above to the men.

The stores is an adjoining building. Here, on the ground floor, is stacked the scenery not in use, and sufficient space is left for the carpenter's bench, at which scenery used in the theatre is made ; the joiner and his assistant are on the permanent staff. As each piece of scenery is built and canvassed it is fastened on to one of the two paint-frames which slide down the walls. When the frame is filled it is drawn up into the scene-painting room above, where the three lady scene-painters turn it into something rich and rare. Everything used on the stage, except modern furniture and some of the metal work, is made by the theatre craftsmen (and women) in the theatre workshops. The whole of this side of the work is under the direct control of the principal designer, Paul Shelving, who has a studio partitioned off the large scene-painting room. Here, when engaged in his main work of designing, he is in immediate touch with his scenic artists and carpenters, and, by telephone, with his dressmakers.

The Repertory Theatre organization is much the same as that of all theatres doing similar work. At the top there are the Director with his Assistant, and the General Manager. These three only are con-

cerned with the whole of the theatre's activities. Then the responsibility is divided. The Business Manager deals with the advertising, box office, receipts and payments, general correspondence, and practically everything except matters relating to the production of plays. His staff consists of a book-keeper and assistant, box office clerks, and correspondence clerks. The Stage Director is responsible for everything connected with the stage. He produces the plays and has to see that they are satisfactorily carried through at every performance. His principal assistant is the Stage Manager, who calls actors for rehearsals, superintends the setting and removal of scenery, looks after the lighting, obtains necessary furniture and properties for each play, keeps records of performances and makes prompt-books and plots. These last are the lists of instructions to heads of different departments of the working staff as to the requirements of performances. For example, there is a scene plot showing how each scene is to be set up ; this is for the Stage Carpenter. A property plot gives a list of the furniture and movable properties for each scene, with their positions on the stage. A lighting plot shows the lighting for each scene. Then there are fly plots and music plots, effects plots, and so on. The Stage Manager is probably the busiest man (or rather, in the present case, woman) in the theatre, and here she has two assistants. Her staff consists of, first, the Stage Carpenter, who is the principal

workman, the Electrician, who is responsible for all lighting, and the Property Man, who makes the properties and has them ready for use at each performance. Directly responsible to the Stage Director is the Designer, with his staff of scenic artists, carpenters, and dressmakers.

The officials of the theatre in the spring of 1924 were as follows :

Director . . . . .	BARRY V. JACKSON, M.A.
Assistant Director . . . . .	BACHE MATTHEWS.
General Manager . . . . .	CYRIL PHILLIPS.
Business Manager . . . . .	ALAN BLAND, M.A.
Stage Director . . . . .	H. K. AYLIFF.
Stage Manager . . . . .	MAUD GILL.
Designer . . . . .	PAUL SHELIVING.
Principal Scene-Painter . . . . .	HILDA BLACKMAR DASH.

The method of work may perhaps be best explained by going rapidly through the preparation of a play for performance. Care has to be exercised in the selection of plays. They must have dramatic and literary value and a reasonable chance of being liked by the audience. The possibilities of our small stage and the size of the company have also to be considered. A list of plays suitable for production is kept in the Assistant Director's office, and this list is constantly being added to. It takes the form of a card index and for each play gives the following information : Name and address of author, and in the case of foreign plays, of translator. Name and address of agent, title of play, number of

acts, name of recommender, list of the scenes, showing the length of each and the kind of scenery required, a few lines of criticism and list of characters. The index is divided into seven sections :

English Modern Tragedy.

English Modern Comedy.

English Costume Tragedy.

English Costume Comedy.

Translated Tragedy.

Translated Comedy.

One-Act Plays.

A provisional programme, generally for six months, is selected by the Assistant Director from among these plays. The programme is submitted to the Director for approval or alteration. It is then passed on to the Stage Director and Designer for their technical advice as to its practicability. Changes may have to be made for various reasons ; perhaps because plays making heavy demands upon the Producer, Designer, or Stage Manager come too close together, and must be separated by something lighter ; or casting difficulties may necessitate changes. We also try to vary the class of work as much as possible, that is to say, it is advisable to alternate modern and costume plays, comedies and tragedies. When the list of plays has been decided upon, typewritten copies are supplied to the various departments, but it has been found advisable to announce publicly not more than the first two plays, in case changes may become necessary later.

The casting is done by the Director, generally in consultation with other members of the management. Parts are supplied to the actors, and estimates of cost prepared by Designer and Producer with the help of the General Manager. All designs and estimates are submitted to the Director and passed or modified by him.

Rehearsals begin a fortnight before the date fixed for production. With the constant succession of productions work has to be as regular as in a business office, and a start is made on the stage every morning at 10 o'clock. So far as possible the afternoons are left free for private study, rest, and social engagements, although in a repertory theatre there is very little time available for the last. Every one is expected to be word perfect at the end of the first week, and in the second week no actor is allowed to use his book at rehearsal. In the meantime, the scenery has been made by the carpenters and has gone up to the scene-room to be painted, and the Wardrobe has been hard at work making up sateens and hessians and other cheap materials, that in the stage lighting look like silks and velvets. We generally rehearse with the scenery set three days before the production, although finishing touches have probably to be added to it up to the last minute. The costumes that are ready are also used at the later rehearsals, and on the day before the production there is a final dress rehearsal, when everything is expected to be ready. Although we

have had over two hundred dress rehearsals during the eleven years of the theatre's work, they are still as worrying as if they occurred only once in twelve months. At the last minute the dresses all want altering, the lighting has gone wrong, the actors have forgotten their lines, and every one is quite sure that to-morrow's production will be an absolute fiasco, but it never is. When at 7.30 the curtain rises for the first performance everything is ready. The morning after the production rehearsals of the next play begin, and so it goes on.

It is a busy life, always full of interest and excitement. There are no long runs, and fresh plays are always in preparation. The revival of a play we have presented before entails a little less work, but in most cases there have been changes in the company since it was last put on, and consequently a great deal of new preparation is necessary. Scenery is rarely kept in stock. As soon as one play is finished the flats are repainted for another, so that the painting department is constantly at work. We try to release each actor in turn from one production out of twelve, but sometimes this is impossible and some actors may go right through the year without a break. In spite of this complaints of overwork are very rare, and actors more frequently resent being left out of a show than they do being included in it.

Great additions have been made to the work of the management by the fact that the theatre has developed

into a kind of information bureau on various matters relating to the drama. Most of the inquiries are from societies of amateurs seeking advice on the selection of plays or methods of staging. We always give what help we can, but I feel that the question 'What play shall we produce?' is one that should not be asked. Surely amateur societies should start by reading plays and keep to this side of the work until they find one that they wish to put into action. If this were done we should have fewer inadequate imitations of popular successes. Societies that are keenly interested in drama and not merely in acting will find their difficulty not in finding plays, but in selecting from the very large number of those awaiting production.

A great deal of time is spent over the reading of new plays. Besides the published ones, the best of which are bought for the theatre library, something like three hundred manuscripts are submitted to our Readers every year. All those that come in are read, but very few of them are found suitable for production here; they may have either dramatic or literary merit, but rarely are the two qualities found together. The worst, though perhaps not the most frequent fault is vulgarity; not vulgarity in the conversation of characters that are represented as vulgar, where it is necessary, but in the whole tendency of a play. Such work conveys an ignoble view of life, and encourages a mean conception of the dramatist's art, which I consider an unforgivable sin. Numbers of manu-

scripts, declined for bad construction, are obviously the work of writers having little or no knowledge of the theatre and the conditions under which plays are produced. I suppose most of the great dramatists of the past have had a working knowledge of the stage, each being able to fit his plays to the stage of his time, and it seems probable that the great plays of the future will come from the theatre, and not from the study. Often a really good beginning deteriorates in the second and third acts, giving the impression that the writer was unable to maintain his own interest in the characters he had created. Most of the manuscripts have some merit, though occasionally quite absurd ones are submitted. An amusing example was a play in three acts and requiring seventeen different scenes, although the whole dialogue could have been spoken in ten minutes; and in the case of another, one-third was in narrative form, and two-thirds in dialogue, as if the writer were uncertain whether he were making a play or a short story. Such thoroughly incompetent work is, however, fortunately rare, and the general level of ability shown is steadily rising.

Mr. Granville-Barker has said that the function of the producer is 'to suggest, to criticise, to co-ordinate.'<sup>1</sup> It is so essentially in such a theatre as this, where the run of a play rarely exceeds a fortnight, and where, consequently, only that length of time can

<sup>1</sup> *The Exemplary Theatre*, p. 226.

be given to the preparation of a production. With only twelve days available for rehearsals, and with two of those twelve cut short by matinées, it is impossible for the producer to do much more than generally direct the production, the fixing of every gesture and every inflexion of the voice, the turning of each actor into a reproduction of the producer himself, requiring a much longer time. But the producer in a repertory theatre has one advantage that is wanting in those of a different kind—he is working with a stock company, he knows his actors and their capabilities, and is able to make the most favourable use of them. The actors, also, having been working together for months, in some cases for years, have become used to one another and have learned to achieve a unity of result, the obtaining of which with a scratch company would necessitate rehearsing for a much longer period. It is obvious that the ideal performance cannot be hoped for under repertory conditions, and that the high degree of finish of the best of the West End productions is out of the question, but the gain in spontaneity and freshness, by reason of this same brevity of preparation, and the co-operation of all concerned encouraged by the stock company system, seem to me to give the advantage to the repertory theatres, over all other English theatre systems, in the striving for artistic perfection.

We have had a number of producers at different times, but only five have directed any considerable

number of plays. F. A. Besant Rice was engaged on this work from the opening of the theatre until the midsummer of 1915. He confined his attention solely to modern work, with which he was conspicuously successful, his productions of Hankin's comedies being perhaps his best. At the same time John Drinkwater was dealing with poetic and costume drama. His early efforts showed lack of experience, but by constant practice he gained skill with extraordinary rapidity, and was soon doing work full of delicacy and imagination. He was most proficient where these qualities were most necessary, as in *The Tragedy of Nan*, *The Faithful*, *The Hour Glass*, and *The Trojan Women*, though after Rice's resignation he directed modern plays also, obtaining excellent results. Jackson generally produces Shakespearean plays, those of Molière, eighteenth-century comedy, and opera. His method is robust and vigorous, suited to the kind of plays he undertakes. He demands clear enunciation and decisive gesture, disliking intensely anything that is half-hearted or uncertain. On Drinkwater's resignation, A. E. Filmer was appointed Stage Director, and he did most of the producing from that time until the end of 1922. His work is scholarly and fastidious, he is never satisfied until he has achieved the utmost degree of finish possible in the time at his disposal. He makes a careful study of each play he directs, paying special attention to psychological values. His work was perhaps seen at its best in the

charming grace of *The Romantic Young Lady*, and in his equally brilliant production of *The Witch* with its mystery and terror. He was succeeded by H. K. Aylyff, who still remains Stage Director. Aylyff is a happy combination of Jackson's vigour and Filmer's delicacy, as well as being an indefatigable worker. The results of his devotion to art and his energy have been seen recently in London in such widely differing plays as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Back to Methuselah*, and *The Farmer's Wife*.

Of the actors it is difficult to speak adequately. More than a hundred have at one time or another been members of the company, and in addition something like double that number have played in odd productions, or on tour. The spirit of co-operation has always existed in an eminent degree and the good of the play has been elevated, I think I may say in every case, above personal advantage. Slackness among them is unknown—there is no room for it in a repertory company—energy, zeal, and a self-sacrificing devotion to the interests of the theatre are characteristic of them all. Naturally the degrees of skill have always varied considerably, but the constantly changing experience in all types of plays soon proves in what direction each actor's abilities lie, and they can then be turned to the best uses. It will readily be understood that with a stock company it is often difficult to cast certain plays. A special engagement is sometimes made for a part for which, at the time, there is

no suitable actor, or a play may be postponed in the hope that it may be presented more worthily at some future time. But generally a play is selected on its own merits and the existing company is fitted into it as suitably as possible. The result is sometimes inadequate, but in the majority of cases a creditable production is given.

During the first six years of the theatre's work, 1913-18, the only settings especially noteworthy were those designed by Barry Jackson. The others were, I think, well painted, but somewhat commonplace. They were kept as simple as possible. The 'Heaven' enables us to use ground rows instead of backcloths for exteriors, but otherwise all our early scenery, excepting Jackson's, was such as might have been seen in any other self-respecting theatre. But Jackson's designs are always interesting, especially those for Elizabethan plays.

Until within the last few years, Shakespeare's and other sixteenth and seventeenth-century plays were treated scenically precisely in the same way as the contemporary drama. There is a great deal to be said in favour of this. It does away with the distinction between old plays and new, and with the feeling in the audience that it is witnessing an anti-quarian revival, rather than an entertainment. But there is a great difference in the stage requirements of the plays of yesterday as compared with those of to-day. Now they may be set in one, or anything up

to four scenes, but rarely more than four ; the old ones may necessitate twenty changes. They were written for a stage on which scenery in the modern sense was unknown, so that the dramatist might alter his locality as he pleased. If actual changes of setting are made for each scene, the plays that were written to run for two and a half or three hours, would be extended to perhaps four hours, a length that would not be tolerated by the most enthusiastic of audiences. The two usual methods of reducing the time taken in performance are to cut out a great deal of the play itself, sometimes as much as one-third, and to change the order of the scenes so as to run together two or more scenes taking place in the same setting, and so reduce the number of changes. Frequently, both methods are adopted. By these means the object is accomplished and the play is given within the customary time limit, but unfortunately it is something quite different from the play of its reputed author. Some other method, therefore, has to be devised by which the work, as written, may be given in its entirety, retaining each scene in its proper place, and at the same time shortening or cutting out altogether the intervals for scene changes. There are two obvious methods of doing this, which are closely allied. One is to give the performance on a curtained stage without any indication of change of scene ; the other is to revive the Elizabethan method of an empty stage with a small curtained inner stage to be used or curtained off

as required. In the latter case, most of the acting takes place on the front or main stage, but for certain scenes where furniture is needed, the inner stage may be thrown open, showing a banquet spread, or a bedroom, or whatever may be wanted. Both of these methods have their good points. A draped stage may be made very beautiful, but there are obvious objections to using the same background for a street in Verona, the palace of the Duke, and the glade in the forest, and though the text may indicate the locality of the scene, such indications will be missed by the audience, unless every word is followed with unremitting attention. This objection applies in less degree to a reproduction of the Elizabethan stage. At the Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich, Mr. Nugent Monck has constructed a stage on the old principles, which he uses with scholarly ingenuity and satisfactory results. It is probably the best possible method of playing Elizabethan plays. Our modern theatres are not built on the same lines, and we cannot reconstruct them for one play and then go back again to the picture stage for the next. The same stage has to be used for *The Interlude of Youth* and *Hamlet* and *Heartbreak House*. The solution, therefore, is not the reconstruction of the stage, but a change in the method of using it.

After a great deal of experiment, Barry Jackson, for old plays, settled upon the principle now generally used by us, which we may call the 'three-stage method.' The idea is not original, for Shakespeare

plays were produced in similar settings in Germany by Immermann as long ago as 1840. William Poel and Granville-Barker also adopted the same principle before the Birmingham Repertory Theatre was opened, but it has never become popular in England. With 'The Pilgrim Players' first Shakespeare performance Jackson endeavoured to discover the most satisfactory method of presenting plays that demand frequent change of locality, without the usual scene waits, and the 'three-stage method' has so far proved the best. The three stages consist of :

- (1) The apron or fore stage.
- (2) The middle stage. This is the main stage on which most of the action takes place.
- (3) The inner stage. This is behind the middle stage and is generally raised above it by two or more steps.

An inner proscenium divides the second stage from the third. The only changes take place on the inner stage, and while they are being made, the action of the play continues on the apron or on the middle stage, curtains in the inner proscenium shutting off the inner stage. There are, therefore, two sets of curtains, the ordinary tableau-curtains to the main proscenium and additional curtains behind the temporary inner proscenium. Scenes with only a few characters can be played on the apron with the main curtains down, which gives an opportunity of placing furniture on the middle stage if it should be needed, although in

practice it is rarely found necessary to make any changes whatever, except to the inner stage. Change of locality is indicated on the inner stage in the ordinary way by alteration of the back-scene. This scene, however, being much smaller than would be required if there were no inner proscenium, can be moved easily. The inner proscenium is treated decoratively and the decoration is made suitable to the play being presented. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* it took the form of a low Tudor arch. For the garden scene this Tudor arch became the entrance to the house, and beyond it, on the inner stage, the garden was shown. For the interior of the inn, the arch became an ingle-nook with a fireplace behind it. For Ford's house it was just an alcove, with the house wall pierced by Tudor windows for a background. Caius's house was on the middle stage, and the inner stage was shut off altogether by curtains. The scene preceding the Herne's oak scene took place on the apron stage, and during its progress the inner proscenium was removed, a tree trunk placed at the front of the inner stage with a low ground row at the back ; this gave all the suggestion of the edge of a forest that was necessary. For *Macbeth* and *King John* the principle was just the same, a Norman arch forming the inner proscenium. Eighteenth-century plays are arranged in a similar way. *The School for Scandal* may be taken as an example. For this there was no arch for the inner proscenium, but only flats, with returns, extending



# SHERIDAN'S "THE RIVALS": ACT I, SCENE I

DESIGNED BY BARRY V. JACKSON

The general tone is grey, warmed by a soft yellow light. The open space behind the railings represents the sky, of pale blue green. The half timbering is warm sepia. The barrel is veridian, and a magenta coloured cloth hangs on a line above. These violent touches of colour are balanced on the other side of the stage by the table with its pewter mugs, a bench and the coach advertisement displayed above.



about a quarter of the way across the stage from each side. Between them, and raised on two steps, was the inner stage. On this Lady Sneerwell's boudoir was set—an eighteenth-century dressing-table with a mirror and the suggestion of a curtained bed. The 'screen scene' was again staged on the inner stage, with a background consisting of a large square window and the end of a bookcase, and so on. Intermediate scenes took place on the middle stage with the curtains closed, changes being made while the scene was being played in front.

In the case of Masefield's *The Faithful*, Jackson built a setting representing the conventionalized front of a Japanese house which filled the stage from side to side. This was for exteriors; and for interiors the centre section of the house was drawn up, behind it being the inner stage, though, of course, the action did not confine itself to the latter, but spread over the middle stage as well.

Jackson used a development of this method for *Henry IV.*, Parts I. and II. In addition to dividing his stage from side to side as in other cases, he also divided the upper stage into two halves, right side and left side, each half having separate curtains. The action of the play alternates almost entirely between the tavern and the palace. For the tavern scenes the curtains on the right were opened and the little inner stage on that side depicted a tavern. The action of the play took place on the whole stage, but this small

scene made the locality obvious. For the palace scenes the tavern curtain was closed and the left-hand curtain was withdrawn, showing a red background spangled with gold lilies, and a throne in the centre. When this scene was open, the locality represented the palace. In description this may sound a little awkward, in practice it worked very smoothly and gave all the locality indications that were necessary.

These various settings, of which Jackson has devised a very large number, are always built architecturally and not scenically, that is to say, they are always in three dimensions. An inner proscenium representing an arch is a solid arch on pillars that obviously would be strong enough to support it if it were constructed of the material it represents. They are always treated with very great decorative skill, some of them being extremely beautiful. Those who saw *Much Ado About Nothing* at this theatre will, I am sure, agree with me. For this play, light Italian arches on slender columns rose from the terrace which formed the inner stage, which was elevated some five feet above the middle stage and was reached by a wide flight of steps. The whole was painted to represent white marble with a pavement of black and white squares. It was lit as brilliantly as possible with a hard white light, the only touch of colour being the brilliant blue of the sky which was the background. The yellow and scarlet costumes of the players against this hard brilliance were extremely

effective and made up one of the most striking stage pictures I have ever seen. Jackson always gets great dignity in his decoration. This is partly achieved by the obvious solidity of the work and partly by the simplicity of his colouring.

He has designed very few modern plays. *Abraham Lincoln* was on the same lines as his eighteenth-century plays—a fixed main setting with slight variations in the background. Perhaps the best example of his work of an entirely different kind from that in which he uses an inner proscenium was his setting for Conrad's *One Day More*. For this play, down stage on the left was seen the front of a white cottage with a little garden enclosed in white railings. Beyond it, round the back and on the right, was only a solidly built sea-wall with a heavy-looking night sky behind. In the centre was a single street lamp.

In his designs for costume, Jackson aims, as in his scenery, for simplicity of colour. He will design the whole of the costumes of a play in two or three colours, as he did in *The Tempest*, the people of the Island wearing green and the visitors wearing red. He always avoids anything in the way of small details, relying upon colour masses entirely for aesthetic results.

Flat scenery has always appeared to many people out of place on a stage on which, of necessity, the actors are solid. It is, I believe, accepted by artists that you cannot combine in the same work of art parts which are in two dimensions naturally with other parts

in three dimensions. Jackson gets out of this difficulty by building his scenery with depth as well as length and breadth. Shelving, on the other hand, paints his almost entirely in the flat, but he gives to it decorative significance and it has no pretensions to being other than a flat background for the action of the play. By doing this, I think the use of flat scenery is justified. The artistic offence is the pretence that the backcloth represents something other than what it is, a widespread landscape, for example. Shelving's scenery never pretends. For him the stage is always a stage and his decorations are stage decorations created in harmony with the play's atmosphere. By the use of line and colour, he suggests, without depicting, the locality of the scene. One may instance the Garden of Eden scene in *Back to Methuselah*. It is not, in any degree, a picture of a landscape, but an extremely lovely piece of decorative painting which, in its fresh and clean colouring, suggests at once the youth of the world. This artist, of course, sometimes uses wings and ground rows instead of backcloths, but the principle remains the same, each piece is a piece of flat decoration. He gives us no eighteenth-century vistas, nor modern perspectives.

Room interiors are, of course, on a somewhat different footing. For these, one can actually build a room on the stage, walls and ceiling, and this he does. His interiors are extremely satisfying. While being such as might actually exist in any house, they



Photo: Lewis & Randall

"THE WOULD-BE GENTLEMAN"

DESIGNED BY PAUL SHELIVING

The walls and ceiling are lemon yellow with divisions in cerise, green and gold. The window frames are emerald outlined in black. The floor is black and emerald. The seats are gold.



have graciousness of colouring and charm of proportion. He designs his interiors throughout. By this I mean that every item of stage furniture or decoration comes into his scheme. The furniture, carpet, light fittings, and the casual properties that are about every actual room—books, flowers, etc., are all specially designed or selected to be in accordance with the setting, and no change can be made without seriously injuring its beauty. For every play he decorates, although similar interiors may be used in several, he makes new designs. Half a dozen plays may need a drawing-room in an English country house, but of the half-dozen, each one will have some subtle emotional difference which needs suggesting and intensifying in the scenery. An example of the way in which he creates the emotion of the play in his decoration may be found in his designs for a drawing-room in *The Cleansing Stain*, and a similar room for the first act of *The Romantic Young Lady*. Both are rooms in houses of the same class—the well-to-do and cultured. *The Cleansing Stain* is a somewhat melodramatic tragedy, and the atmosphere all through is sinister. The room he designed was in purple and gold, rich and foreboding. At the back was a French window leading into a conservatory and the conservatory was filled with plants of an evil, almost putrescent green. One felt that happy life in such a room was impossible. *The Romantic Young Lady* was set in a room of very similar proportions in blue

and gold with black furniture decorated in the same colours, but as soon as one saw it, one felt that it was a happy and delightful place—a room in which charming people lived and pleasant things happened. Shelving always does this : he regards his study of the play to get its inmost meaning as the first and most important part of his work. As another instance of the same thing, one may again refer to that first scene of *Back to Methuselah*, with its feeling of essential youth. The second scene of the same play, *An Oasis in Mesopotamia*, was vivid and hot and of the earth—a complete contrast to that which had just gone before it. In the forest used for the first act of *The Immortal Hour* he has shown what he can do in getting the effect of extreme age. None of the trunks are twisted or have any of the recognized marks of age in nature, and yet one feels that Etain's description of it as 'this old wood' is the only possible one.

Shelving uses a very wide range of colour and his effects are sometimes dazzling in their brilliance. The only thing in colour that he seems unable to achieve is muddiness. Nearly all other scenery that I have seen appears dirty when compared with his. He goes to very great trouble to procure pure and bright colours. When he first came to us, he found the paint-room supplied with the usual stock of scene-painter's colours. He at once scrapped practically the whole of it, finding that very little of it came up to his idea of what pure



Photo: Geo. Dawson

## "ROMEO AND JULIET": STREET CURTAINS

DESIGNED BY PAUL SHELIVING

*Pink buildings relieved with red, black and white, standing before an ultramarine river. The sails of the ship are yellow. The sky is turquoise blue.*



colour should be. He then set to work to find the paint that he really wanted, and though I don't believe he will ever be satisfied until he can actually steal the tints from the rainbow, he has succeeded in getting the best and purest colours obtainable.

Naturally, he does not consider that his work is done when the scene is painted and put up. Much of the effect has to be obtained by lighting, and he and the producer spend many hours in illuminating the scene till it is as nearly as he can get it in accordance with his mental vision.

His costumes, in design and colour, are consistent with his scenery, and he usually favours a similar brilliance. It is frequently impossible to obtain materials of the colours he requires, and we have to dye most of the materials in the theatre. Occasionally he wants something that is even beyond the range of the dyes that we can obtain, and then the dress is taken into the paint-room and painted as if it were a ground row or a wing.

The plays produced here are shown in the list at the end of this volume. They number one hundred and ninety-four, and of these forty had never been presented on the stage before. Of the remaining one hundred and fifty-four, ten were given by us for the first time in this country, and sixty-three for the first time in Birmingham. The balance of eighty-one includes a number of old plays which may have been offered to Birmingham audiences in the past, though

in some cases I cannot find that such productions have been recorded. The present generation of local playgoers would have had no opportunities of seeing the majority of those in the list if they had not been put on at this theatre. In addition to the plays, eight operas, two ballets, and one mime play have been produced, a total of two hundred and five shows of various kinds.

An average of nineteen fresh plays per year, some of which are only in one act, may not be a particularly remarkable achievement. Other companies may have done as much, or even more, but none, I think, have produced an equal number of plays on the scale on which ours have been done during the last five years. We do not use stock scenery, brought in time after time, for every play for which it can be made remotely suitable. With few exceptions all the recent plays have been specially designed, both as regards scenery and costumes, and although seen by only about three or four thousand people, have been produced as carefully as if for an audience of fifty times that number. The amount of work entailed is enormous, and is possible only by the most careful organization. Every play, whatever its importance or magnitude, has to be taken as part of the ordinary work of the theatre. With fortnightly runs there is no time for special productions.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PUBLIC AND OURSELVES

**D**URING their five years' work, 'The Pilgrim Players' had interested a small but regular audience. Sometimes there were attendances of from three to four hundred, but they rarely exceeded two hundred and were occasionally as low as seventy. There were probably about five hundred persons interested in the work, and these came to practically everything that was produced. Everything possible was done to carry over this five hundred to form the nucleus of the audience at the theatre. Emphasis was laid on the continuity of the work of the new institution. The majority of those few hundreds continued to attend when the Station Street theatre was opened. Five hundred people attending regularly at performances given in a hall where there were only two or three consecutive presentations of the same play appeared very promising, but the same number in a theatre with a rather larger capacity and giving at least seven performances of each play, means a very small average attendance. It was probably a mistake to call attention to the fact that the Repertory Theatre was continuing the work of 'The Pilgrim

Players.' The advantage that the theatre gained by taking over the 'Pilgrim' audience was probably more than counterbalanced by the reputation that connection gave us of being an amateur institution. For years we were regarded by the public in general as amateur, and the impression has not altogether died away even now. There were certainly grounds for such an impression. Firstly, stress was laid upon the fact that the theatre continued the work of a society well known to be amateur, and secondly, it was known that some of 'The Pilgrim Players' had been included in the Repertory Company, but of the ten men in the stock company, only three had been 'Pilgrims,' and one of these had already had professional experience, and of the five ladies, three had previously done only amateur work. It is quite reasonable that the public in general should refuse to pay to see amateur performances when professional ones are available, and only too few of them are sufficiently interested in good plays to be attracted by the fare offered.

Another erroneous impression that got about concerning our work was that all plays were given without scenery. This probably came about through the curtained stage frequently used by 'The Pilgrim Players.' In 'The Pilgrim' times attention had been drawn to the use of the draped stage, and it was claimed to be an improvement on the inadequate scenery possible on an amateur stage. Undoubtedly, under the circumstances, curtains were often to be

preferred, but with the efficient equipment of the new theatre, we were able to make use of scenery from the opening performance. However, the story got about that scenery was not in use in this strange little theatre in Station Street, and the majority accepted that rumour without making any effort to find out for themselves whether it were true or not.

For the first two seasons we did not install an orchestra. Experience, as playgoers, of the usual theatre orchestra did not lead us to suppose that the addition of music would increase the aesthetic value of the performances. It was found, however, that the absence of music between the acts was unpopular, and a string quartette was engaged which, together with a piano, has been found sufficient for so small an auditorium.

There were other things that were disliked in the theatre. The form of the auditorium was objected to as being more like a lecture hall than a place of amusement. This, coupled with the fact that the fine quality of the plays offered was emphasized, gave to many the impression that the theatre was out to educate. The public does not like being educated through what it considers should be purely amusement. I think newcomers may, perhaps, have been a little disconcerted by some of our other methods, such as the sounding of a gong a minute before the rise of the curtain, then the slow dimming of the house lights, until at a second sounding of the gong the curtain

risers. At the first gong a general hush goes through the house and for a full minute the audience sits in silence waiting for the rise of the curtain. To the habitués this is an advantage, but a casual visitor may be rather chilled by the almost religious awe which precedes the beginning of even a comedy. Until a year ago we refused to take the curtain up after it had once fallen at the end of a play. Aesthetically, I am sure this course is right. The players should be seen only in the play's action, and not standing in a row along the front of the stage to receive applause. This custom was also objected to by many, and it certainly had the effect of diminishing applause, although it may not have really diminished the enthusiasm. The shutting out of late comers was at first unpopular, but the advantages of this in a small theatre are so obvious that very few now make any protest when asked to wait in the hall until the end of the scene.

These are probably some of the reasons for the very small audiences with which we ran our first season. After the few nights when curiosity was being satisfied, attendances dropped down to a most depressing extent. Very slowly the sincerity of the work began to make itself felt. The second season was slightly, but very slightly, better than the first. The third and fourth again showed slight improvements. It was not until the season 1917-18 that any considerable audience was made. That year the attendance increased to

half as much again as it was during the first year, and in the following year there was another big jump. By 1919-20 we had more than doubled our original attendances. At this time the depreciation of money values consequent upon the War had increased our expenses so enormously that some increase in the price of admission became essential. The prices were now revised and by this means we increased our money capacity by about thirty per cent. For the first year the increased prices caused a fall in the attendance although there was an increase in the actual revenue. This improved in 1921-22, during which period the theatre received the largest takings it has ever had in any one year. 1922-23 showed a slight decrease, and for the year 1923-24 the theatre was open for only eight months, but the average takings for those eight months were a slight improvement on the previous year, though not as good as in 1921-22.

The increase during the first seven years was probably due to various causes. We were gradually living down the prejudices and misconceptions raised at first, and the quality of the performances was improving steadily. Nearly all the original audience continued to attend, and probably their personal introduction of friends was of more value than the ordinary theatre publicity methods. To a certain number the Repertory became a habit. On any particular night of the week it was known beforehand who would be present. Some regular visitors arrived

every Wednesday night or every Friday night, and so on throughout the week. Except for a play that had achieved exceptional popularity, such as *Abraham Lincoln* or *The Farmer's Wife*, there were few casual visitors. These can always be recognized by their offering money in cloakrooms and for programmes.

In August 1917 the system of booking by voucher was introduced. A book of sixteen vouchers was sold at a price rather less than the price of sixteen tickets. These vouchers could be given in exchange for theatre tickets at the box office. They might be used one or two at a time, or a party of sixteen might buy a book of vouchers and use them all on the one evening. A great many friends bought these voucher-books and then arranged with the box office clerk to keep them one or more seats for a particular day for every play produced. For example, one would ask for seats to be reserved for the first Tuesday of each new production, and such seats were kept reserved throughout the season, no further booking being necessary.

After the prices were increased it was found that a 2s. 4d. Balcony made impossible demands upon certain intelligent members of the audience. The audience has never been drawn from any particular class—middle, lower, working, or professional. It has been our privilege to appeal to the more intelligent of all classes. The officials of the Workers' Educational Association made representation to the theatre that many of their members were being shut out by the

increased prices, and being anxious that this should not occur, we made special arrangements with that association. Privilege tickets were issued to the W.E.A. officials for distribution among such of their members as were inconvenienced by the increased prices. These tickets were available on certain nights only and admitted at a reduction of 1s. Similar privilege tickets were also issued to other institutions, including a number of factory welfare centres. They were taken advantage of very largely and generally something like five hundred of these tickets were in circulation.

As is made evident by the statement of attendances given above, we did not participate to any great extent in the theatre boom that occurred during the latter years of the War, and as a result did not get the disastrous slump that came after it. Attendances decreased slightly, but at the time the theatre was closed in February last business was only slightly less than it had been during the most prosperous year.

But a growth much more significant than that of numbers has been apparent in the audience—a growth of critical ability and sympathetic understanding. The intelligent interest taken in the plays and the discriminating appreciation of the actors' accomplishment has been the greatest possible stimulus to our work. The theatre and its audience have developed together, each helping the other to expand and advance

in achieving its share of the ultimate aim of both, the perfect theatre. The best in the theatre will be produced only by having the best on both sides the curtain, and though we are yet a long way from the goal, the present attainment would not have been possible with a less intelligent audience. It is probably as critical as any in the country, but its criticism is understanding and liberal. Audible appreciation may be less vociferous than in some theatres, but the performances are followed with earnestness and quiet attention. Applause is reserved for the ends of scenes, and the attempt of a misguided newcomer to raise a round at an inappropriate moment evokes, from all parts of the house, protests not loud but deep. Such keenness now enables us to produce plays that would not be possible in some theatres, and present them in a style of scenery which we should have hesitated to use a few years ago. However, I do not for one moment pretend that an ideal audience has been achieved ; it still has to be nursed and a certain amount of compromise is necessary. Up to the present we have not been justified in giving as much time as we would like to the finest form of drama, great tragedies. Tragedy is unpopular here as elsewhere, though there have been notable exceptions, the most striking being that of *The Witch*. *The Witch* is a tragedy of the sombrest kind and yet has proved an attraction on each occasion of its presentation. Modern comedy is unquestionably the favourite dramatic fare, plays of Shaw, Wilde,

Hankin, and Chapin being the most popular. Hankin's *The Cassilis Engagement* is sure of a general welcome whenever it is revived ; *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Arms and the Man*, *Getting Married*, and Chapin's *The New Morality* are almost as certain of attracting big audiences, while Phillpotts' *The Farmer's Wife* has been the most complete success of the last year. We do fairly well with Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* drawing the largest 'houses,' while other comedies prove little less attractive. Such being our experience, we have of recent years abandoned 'Triple Bills'—never very popular—and decreased the number of tragedies presented. Compromise to this extent has been necessary if the theatre is to maintain its attendances, but no compromise has been made as to the quality of the plays produced, though it is of course admitted that a few in our repertoire are below our standard, and these are now abandoned as mistakes. Naturally there have been exceptions to the general rule that tragedies are unpopular. *The Witch* has been mentioned, but Carroll Aikins' *The God of Gods* also achieved popularity, as have certain serious plays that are not strictly tragic, for example *Back to Methuselah* and *Heartbreak House*, *Abraham Lincoln* and *Mary Stuart*. On the other hand, certain comedies that appear to have all the elements of popularity have failed to attract ; *The Fantasticks*, Griboyedov's *The Misfortune of Being Clever*, Van-

brugh's *The Confederacy*, and Jonson's *The Alchemist* were played to very small audiences. A certain number of people, perhaps a thousand, come to every play produced—some have never missed a production since the theatre opened ; about three times that number come occasionally whenever a particular play attracts them ; outside these are the general public who wake up only when an unusual amount of noise has been made by a play such as *Abraham Lincoln*, *Back to Methuselah*, or *The Farmer's Wife*. The theatre would like to play for the thousand only, but this is impracticable, and until the number of the faithful increases, we cannot do all we wish.

Owing to the comparatively small numbers, similarity of tastes, and the regularity with which the same people meet together, the audience has become an unusually friendly one. The gatherings in the foyer, between the acts, are often more like private parties than miscellaneous crowds meeting by chance in a theatre. This cordial feeling is encouraged in every way possible. It is a rule of the theatre that at least one member of the management shall always not only attend in the front hall to greet the arrivals, and at the end for 'good-byes,' but shall also be present in one of the foyers during intervals to chat with those who care to do so, and he generally has a rather busy ten minutes. Similar good feeling has always existed among all the workers of the theatre—actors, management, and staff—and this, in time, has had its effect

on the public, and created an atmosphere of friendliness that I have not experienced to the same degree in any analogous institution. It is helped also by the 'Playgoers' Society,' at the meetings of which actors and audience meet on equal footing. The Society was started in February 1920 as the result of a suggestion made to me by a member of the audience that some means should be found whereby those of the audience who desired to do so might express their opinions of the plays being produced, and whereby the theatre could give more information concerning the plays and their authors than is possible on a programme. The medium suggested was a magazine, but on consideration this was regarded as impracticable at the time. A Sunday evening meeting of the audience was called, and after some discussion the formation of a Playgoers' Society was decided upon. A hundred and fifty members were enrolled at once, and the membership has now grown to more than six hundred. The subscription is merely nominal, the expenses being very small, as no charge is made for the use of theatre, light, heating, or cleaning. The Society elects its own committee, on which, however, there must be two members appointed by the Director of the theatre, one of whom is always chairman of the committee. By this means, although the Society is, in the main, self-governing, the management of the theatre is able to give it a certain amount of guidance. The object of the Society is the study of drama, and

by such study to train a discriminating audience that shall be satisfied only with the best that the theatre can give. The meetings are held on alternate Sunday evenings, from October to May, when lectures are given or papers read, and these are followed by discussion and criticism. Plays recently presented at the theatre or announced for early production are sometimes made the subject of debate, but nothing connected with the drama is excluded, excepting only the question of merits or faults of actors in our own company. It is generally felt that this exception is demanded by good taste, as actors are frequently present. The lecturers are in some cases members of the Society, but generally they are invited from outside. They have included Bernard Shaw, John Drinkwater, William Poel, St. John Ervine, Nugent Monck, Rutland Boughton, Dame Ethel Smyth, and many others. During the session 1923-24 the Society made a new departure in the production of a play—Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, for which the theatre provided the necessary scenery and dresses, while the actors and producer were all 'Playgoers,' inexperienced in stage work. The performance was a very creditable one, and three other productions are in contemplation for the session 1924-25. Subsidiary reading circles have been formed in connection with the parent Society, giving attention to special types of plays—one is studying translations and another recent English dramas. In addition to its educational

importance this institution has considerable social value, as a quarter of an hour of every meeting is given up to general conversation.

When the publication of a theatre magazine was suggested early in 1920 it was regarded as impracticable. At that time the management considered that its hands were full and that it could not undertake so serious an addition to its work. However, in the summer of 1921 Alan Bland was appointed to assist in the managerial duties, and offered to take over the editing of a journal as part of his work. A shilling monthly was decided upon, and the first number was issued in December of that year with the title of *The Gong*. *The Gong* was a quarto with from thirty-six to forty pages in each number. The paper and type were good, the decorated capitals used at the beginning of each article being particularly admirable. Two or three full page half-tone plates were included in each part, and altogether the 'get-up' of the little magazine was excellent. The matter was varied, but with two or three exceptions it all related in some way to the drama. In addition to articles on coming plays and criticisms of past plays, there were accounts of other theatres and their work, critical essays on dramatists and drama, notes on stage history, dancing, music, and stage craft. The criticisms of past plays were given in a serial 'Birmingham Chronicle,' written by R. Crompton Rhodes, dramatic critic of the *Birmingham Post*. Another journalist on the

staff of the same paper, A. J. Sheldon, the musical critic, contributed articles on music, as also did Appleby Matthews. Among other writers who gave assistance were John Drinkwater, Gordon Bottomley, William Poel, Arundel del Re, and William Jaggard. Members of the theatre staff also contributed. Most of the illustrations were from designs for scenery and costumes by Paul Shelving, but there were others by Jackson, Guy Kortright, and Hilda B. Dash, and a few portraits. Two pictures call for special mention, black and white drawings of the Repertory Theatre stage during rehearsals, by Mrs. Laura Knight. Unfortunately we were able to issue only eleven numbers of this journal. The expense of production was heavy and the sales small, although the price charged barely covered the actual cost of printing. Before the end of the year the loss on the venture was found to be so great that it was discontinued, but it may be resuscitated in a somewhat different form when the theatre is re-opened.

By such means we have sought to turn the whole theatre, actors and audience, into an integral community, having identical interests and aspirations. Not until this is accomplished can we hope even to begin the work that we aspire to do—the giving of perfect performances of great plays, and by means of these to assist in the fuller development of mankind. This must be the ultimate aim of the theatre manager, as of other artists, if his function is to be more than

mere shopkeeping—the making of money by supplying the public with what it wants, or with what it thinks it wants. The want is as yet but a blind desire, accepting facile, obvious, and mean plays more readily than the more difficult great and noble ones. The theatre has to create the demand for better things, not minister to an existing demand for the less worthy. To appreciate the best, taste needs to be heightened by experience, and in how few theatres may taste be exercised or good experience acquired? The statement is sometimes made that the theatre-goer gets the kind of entertainment he deserves, but it would be as reasonable to say that the child who eats poisonous berries gets the food that he deserves. How, without experience or guidance, shall he differentiate the wholesome from the noxious? It is for the repertory theatres to give such guidance, not as prophets claiming authority or omniscience, but as pilgrims struggling onwards ourselves and striving to carry others with us from the less good to the better, in the hope that our successors may continue from the better to the ideal. We have taken but a few steps on the journey, often stumbling, but our faces have been turned to the light.

## CHAPTER VI

### OTHER OPINIONS

**T**HIS chapter consists of a description of the building written by the architect who designed it and superintended its construction, an addition to the foregoing records written by its first General Manager, John Drinkwater, and an article by the distinguished dramatist, Bernard Shaw, who has seen something of the work of the theatre from the inside. In addition to these there are impressions by a professional dramatic critic and two representative members of the audience.

#### *THE BUILDING*

(Described by the architect, SAM. N. COOKE, F.R.I.B.A.)

It was in April 1912 that Mr. Barry Jackson called at my office and instructed me to design a small theatre for him. I had known him for about eight years. We were both articled to architects in Birmingham and were students at the School of Art at the same time. I believe it was whilst measuring up an old building that I first met Mr. Jackson, who was similarly employed. Later he forsook the greatest of all the arts, at which he would have left his mark,



*Photo: Lewis & Randall*

THE BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE  
THE PROSCENIUM



for a sister art. Mr. Jackson was an ideal client. He knew what he wanted and insisted on having it, but was sympathetic and helpful in criticism. The Repertory Theatre is his idea and the general plan is his conception. His instructions to me were to build a small theatre, every seat-holder having an uninterrupted view of the stage, an intimate feeling between the audience and the players being the keynote of the design ; the stage was to be well equipped and to have the most up-to-date lighting ; it must have an apron stage approached by two small doors on either side of the proscenium opening ; the orchestra must be sunk ; good entrance hall, cloakrooms, and lounges to be provided, while special stress was laid on the importance of providing excellent artistes' dressing-rooms, so many theatres being inadequate in this respect.

The site was duly inspected and surveyed, and it was then that I discovered the problem I was up against. How was I to plan a theatre with a frontage of 43 ft. and a depth of 100 ft. with a frontage on the back road of 100 ft. The magistrates' requirements called for half the total length of the external walls abutting on to two thoroughfares or ways. It will thus be seen why most theatres are placed on corner sites. This could not be the case in the Repertory Theatre, so it was imperative to make the most of the frontages on Station Street and Hinckley Street. Therefore the main idea of the plan had presented itself—the entrance was to be in Station Street and the stage in the back

street with its entrance and dressing-rooms running down on the street. Sketch plans were soon prepared on these lines, but there were many points which were not solved, one of the most important being how to get the management from the front to the back of the house when the whole width of the building complete was only 43 ft., it being impossible to spare any room for side passages—another, how to get a stage suitable for repertory work with the area at my disposal. Other problems presented themselves and I felt I was badly in need of inspiration. I was very keen, but felt I had not got the right atmosphere. There was nothing in England which would be of much use to me, for prior to 1912 there had been no actual repertory theatres built here and very few examples of a really adequate small theatre. I therefore determined to go to Germany and see some of the Rheinhardt Theatres before I perfected my plans. I consequently discussed this matter with Mr. Jackson, who very readily fell in with my ideas, and the next three weeks were spent in a flying visit to the principal theatres in Germany.

I do not now propose to describe these German theatres. Suffice it to say that from the points of view of spacious planning and the general arrangement of the stage and its equipment, I doubt whether better examples can be found in any other European country. This visit greatly widened my ideas on theatres, but I did not gain much actual help for my particular

problems. The Germans would have built this Repertory Theatre in Cannon Hill Park, and I had to build on a frontage of 43 ft. ! However, hurrying back to Birmingham I immediately started on my final sketch plans.

After several discussions, Mr. Jackson and I decided to omit the usual pit and circle, and plan a step auditorium. This fulfilled Mr. Jackson's first requirement that every one should have a clear view of the stage, and created an intimate feeling between the actors and their audiences which he was very anxious to bring about. It also enabled me to get my connection between the front and back of the house by planning it under this raised amphitheatre, and gave me room for good cloakroom accommodation in the entrance. Thus the plan of the theatre became clearly defined. From the entrance in Station Street you may enter cloakrooms for both sexes on the same level, and a flight of steps in the vestibule leads to the first floor level, from which are approached the boxes in the back of the auditorium. This drops down in steps to the back street level, the buffet and lounge being planned here with a vestibule entrance to the street. A gallery capable of seating about 200 was arranged for, with two entrances from Station Street. The dressing-rooms were planned on two floors over the lounge in Hinckley Street, with wardrobe and sewing-rooms on the third floor.

The stage occupies the remainder of the site at the

rear of the auditorium, being 42 ft. by 28 ft., and I wish it could have been larger. There is a good cellar underneath with the usual traps and extra cuts provided, the idea being that space and time would be saved by dressing certain scenes in the basement and using the cuts to hoist them on to the stage. Perhaps there is something to be said for this idea, but I doubt if it has been of much actual use in practice.

A well-equipped electrical board and set were installed, and Mr. Jackson decided to have the Fortuny system of lighting, which has been proved to be a great success in some of the German theatres, and although the stage admittedly was small he determined to have a 'Heaven.' This was a plaster background, elliptical on plan, which was erected on the back of the stage about 2 ft. 6 in. from the wall and extended to the grid about 40 ft. above the stage level. A lot of trouble was taken over this, for we had to find the right material to make it in, but eventually we decided that the finished surface should be plaster coloured the very lightest tint of blue. For night scenes stars had to be arranged for, and some care was taken with these.

The stage was very fully equipped with fire appliances. The fireproof curtain automatically rings itself down when a fire breaks out on the stage and the sprinklers immediately start. Several years after the theatre was built, the drop curtain caught fire in the night, but everything acted perfectly ; the sprinklers started

up and the fire was extinguished without any outside help. The only damage done was that the cellar was filled with water.

A large apron stage was provided with room for the orchestra underneath. When this was not required the floor was removed, allowing more space for the orchestra. Two small doors in the proscenium wall served the apron stage. The use of this stage for Shakespearean plays has been very marked.

The dressing-rooms were provided with special lockers, lavatory basins, and hot and cold water. Under the dressing-rooms were planned the Stage Manager's, General Manager's, and other offices, while electrical rooms, fan rooms, etc., were arranged in close proximity. A good system of heating and ventilation was installed, warm air being brought in in the winter and cold air in the summer.

It was decided that the decorations were to be simple in character. Brown was chosen as the dominant colour, the drop curtain being brown velvet, the seats brown leather, and the walls dark oak with panels of gold canvas. The oak round the gallery and over the proscenium opening was inlaid with ebony and satinwood. The ceiling was enriched with large panels, the centre of each panel being brown. The vestibule entrance and staircase were marble, white Sicilian and brown Napoleon being used. The lounge at the back of the theatre had a marble floor and skirting; the walls were covered with brown paper, the idea

being to use these walls for hanging water-colours and prints. All the fittings, etc., were dark oak.

I returned from Germany in July 1912, the contract for the building was signed in October, and the theatre was opened in February 1913. I doubt whether a theatre has been built in less time, but we were enthusiastic in those days and Mr. Jackson was anxious to commence his work. I was fortunate in having a good builder who was out to do his best. We worked day and night. At 11 o'clock at night I used to pay my last visit to the building when the men were working on the scaffolding by the light of flares. What looked like an impossible job, building a theatre in the winter from start to finish in four months, was actually accomplished. The stage work was entirely new to me, but I was fortunate in having the advice of Mr. Basil Dean. We engaged our own stage carpenters and instructed them in all the stage work, this being outside the work of the general contractors.

It was all so new and so immensely interesting to me that I was sorry when it was over, and I really felt that I should like to begin all over again. In breaking new ground in any subject one's first effort is bound to be somewhat experimental, but in approaching a second task of a like character one may hope to get nearer to the real thing.

*THE BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE*

By BERNARD SHAW

The lesson of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre is one that I have been learning since I was a small boy. It is that art is kept alive, not by the established trade in it, but by the desperate efforts of art-hungry individuals to create and recreate it out of nothing for its own sake. The first flute at the opera gives us something that we can always get by paying for it; but we shall not pay for it unless we start with a certain percentage of persons who infuriate their neighbors by attempts, entirely disinterested and only partially successful, to play the penny whistle, which probably now costs sixpence. The mouth organ is the seed of the cathedral organ, and is sometimes a more agreeable instrument. The fiddle is more expensive and much more difficult; but there are men and women who stint themselves in the necessities and decencies of life to procure a fiddle and scrape it villainously.

The artistic activities of these devoted people are free. If they were paid for their work instead of being execrated for it, they would be subject to a restrictive dictation which would make their art hateful to them. The professional fiddler who is not a very good fiddler spends his life playing second fiddle parts in bands which never touch serious music.

He plays rumtiddyumtumtumtum all his life, with an occasional tremolando to keep him from going mad ; and when he is not playing in the band he is giving cheap lessons to amateurs : an even more dreadful occupation, because it is worse to have to listen to a bad player than to be a bad player yourself. But the amateur can and does devote himself to the highest music he can appreciate. Long before he can play Home Sweet Home in single notes without making everyone within earshot curse the day of his birth, he attacks Bach's chaconne, and by dint of repeatedly murdering it comes to know it, and pays a shilling or twelve shillings, according to his means, to hear Kreisler or Heifetz play it when the trade engages the town hall and pays one of them handsomely to give a recital. His taste for Bach, beginning in a mere curiosity about Bach, naturally extends beyond his violin music : our chaconnicide will pay also to hear a pianist play the Chromatic Fantasia, or a choir sing the Mass in B minor.

This artistic freedom to play just what they like instead of what they can, may, and quite often does, develop the talents of amateurs to a point at which they become more accomplished, and much more cultured, than the average professional player, who ends by not being an artist at all, but simply a person who, on being paid a wage settled for him by the Musicians' Union, will produce a specified sound at a specified moment from his instrument without further concern or

responsibility, dreaming meanwhile of the day when he will win the Calcutta Sweep and never need play his instrument again. Such a professional musician does not want to play interesting new works or memorable old ones, because he never wants to play at all. The amateur tries everything ; and though he may be recklessly inaccurate and desultory, and does not always hold fast by that which is good, at least he holds fast by that which he likes ; and the fact that he likes music of some sort or other gives him a quality which is vital in art though dispensable in the trade.

Unfortunately a great deal of the skill and culture attained painfully by our amateurs is wasted on indifferent solo playing and singing, or at best on quartet playing, for want of organization. Sometimes they practise only in solitude, because they know that they cannot entertain others as they entertain themselves. But under voluntary discipline they could be made publicly useful. Probably every place with a thousand inhabitants in these islands has the material for the performance of an opera or a play every year by local executive talent. What is lacking is the indispensable organizer : the conductor for the music, and the manager for the play. Such a conductor or manager needs something more than the specific ability to conduct and to manage, as plenty of employment for such ability is provided by the trade. He (or she) must be an enthusiast for the sort of art that the trade will not provide because it does not pay. Therefore

he must be something of a desperado as well ; for the performance of operas and dramas without ready-made professional singers and players and actors is impossible on the face of it. But it is only on the face that it is impossible. Superficial impossibility would seem to have reached its limit in the proposal to obtain performances of Mozart's operas from boys in the elementary schools in the east end of London ; but now that Mr C. J. Smith has shewn the way it is done every year. If a schoolmaster of the right sort can do this with boys who would feel flattered if they were described by so mild an epithet as uncultured, it is clear that the considerable section of our middle class which dabbles in art and literature of all sorts could, under capable leadership, do anything that the trade could do if the trade were willing to work and pay for art instead of using it merely as a means of making money.

Now when the organizer has arisen from the apparent void, and has dug out and trained and combined all the hidden and wasted amateur talent in his neighborhood, he soon discovers that many of the best professional executants are artists and enthusiasts like himself, and are equally dissatisfied with the opportunities to which the trade limits them. They covet the amateur's privilege of doing what he likes instead of what he is engaged to do. On that condition they will sing or act for what the enterprise will bear, or, if need be, for nothing. Thus a process is set on

foot by which the best of the amateur artists discovered and developed by the local amateur circle become professionals, whilst the most gifted professionals find themselves lending a hand at local theatres which are more like Summer Schools than ordinary commercial playhouses.

This is not only a possibility but an accomplished fact. A very notable instance is that of the musical festivals established in Glastonbury by Mr Rutland Boughton ; but as an example to be generally followed it is discounted by the circumstance that Mr Rutland Boughton is a composer of genius, and can not only organize and conduct operatic performances, but create the operas. There would be little hope for cognate enterprises if they were dependent on phenomena of such extreme rarity as the appearance of organizers capable of handing out an *Immortal Hour* to keep the pot boiling. Mr Boughton's case was one of genius getting all it dares to ask for : an optimistic commonplace which is obviously and outrageously untrue, but which nevertheless has enough foundation to make it impossible to pretend that every energetic conductor can do what Mr Boughton has done. All that can be said is that Gluck's operas—the ultra classics of opera—proved feasible with local talent in a very out-of-the-way Somerset country town with Mr Boughton to teach the inhabitants to sing.

But no Somerset village can be as Godforsaken in art as a great industrial city. Glastonbury provided an

atmosphere for Mr Boughton more wonderful than Bayreuth for Wagner. The atmosphere of Birmingham, where Mr Barry Jackson set up his famous repertory theatre, could help him only homeopathically, by provoking a starving revolt against its desolating Philistinism. All the theatrical circuits have their 'rotten towns'; and Birmingham was so notorious as the rottenest town on the Number One circuit when anything but the vulgarest art of the theatre was concerned, that I, for one, used to urge touring managers to cut out Birmingham, as they would infallibly lose there all that they might reasonably expect to gain in Manchester. If anyone had told me twenty years ago that I should one day write a cycle of plays as far beyond all possibility of performance in the beaten way of trade as Wagner's *Ring* was in Germany in 1866, and that this theatrical monstrosity would be first performed, and promptly performed, in Birmingham, I should have marked off that prophet as the most extravagant lunatic in the world. But Mr Barry Jackson not only produced *Back to Methuselah*, but took it in his stride. It would have been a convulsive departure from the routine of a trade theatre; but it was a normal incident in the Birmingham Repertory, except for the troublesome box office novelty of making the spectators book their seats for five plays instead of for one. The readers of this history already know that Mr Barry Jackson had repeatedly done equally extraordinary

things without getting the least credit for it, in opera and in revivals of the treasures and curiosities of which the dramatic literature of the eighteenth century is full.

It will be seen also that Mr Barry Jackson, though he took the talent he organized where he could find it, and was never dependent on the trade for it, was able to professionalize it to the extent of enabling it to live by its exertions in spite of the recalcitrance of the very demoralized playgoers of his city. He was also able to build a theatre and carry on in a dignified environment. But in essentials he has been the creative manager I have tried to describe in general terms, making a theatre of first rate artistic importance spring up in a theatrical desert, and doing for the drama in Birmingham what Sir Whitworth Wallis has done for pictorial art there by his management of the municipal Art Gallery.

His pioneering is producing remarkable results. Mr Nugent Monck's Maddermarket Theatre in Norwich has achieved a characteristic permanent building, and will soon be able to appeal nightly, instead of occasionally, to the reluctant soul of that benighted cathedral city. In Newcastle and Sheffield little groups of enthusiasts do amazing things under apparently impossible circumstances. Liverpool and Plymouth keep a repertory theatre apiece on foot; and the Old Vic in London and the Abbey Theatre in Dublin have had their fame trumpeted so loudly

that the Birmingham Theatre may be said to have been shouted down by them during its earlier years, though in variety and adventurousness it far surpassed them all, and thereby set a fresh and fruitful example which has been followed spiritedly by Mr Norman Macdermott in his Everyman Theatre in London, and by Messrs Arnold Bennett and Nigel Playfair in their revivals of eighteenth century work.

Mr Barry Jackson made his peculiar mark because he not only had a taste for good things, but let that taste play about, and so kept his theatre out of a groove. *Back to Methuselah* might have been produced as an act of piety by any manager with a craze for the Shavian movement in the theatre which was begun and established by the Vedrenne-Barker management at the Royal Court Theatre in London in 1904. The unique feature of the Birmingham production was that it added the Methuselah cycle to a repertory which included Shakespear's *Cymbeline* in modern dress, Sheridan's then forgotten *Duenna*, Goldsmith's *Good-natured Man*, and the many other experiments, grave and gay, recorded in this book. In short, the secret of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre's special character is that it has never been a tied house : it has been fancy free ; and its repertory is ' of fancy bred ' in the sense and vein of Shakespear's *Dream*. That is why all genuine artists have found themselves so happily at home there.

G. B. S.

*A PERSONAL NOTE*

By JOHN DRINKWATER

I write this note without having seen the manuscript of Mr. Bache Matthews's book, but I am sure that I can add nothing of importance to the historical account of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre that he will have given. In his friendly way, however, he protests that his book would be incomplete without some word from me of the years when I, with him, was Mr. Barry Jackson's colleague, years that now so strangely seem to belong almost to another age. I bow to his decision and call up my ghosts.

Should I dwell upon those casual incidents that added character to the day's work when the day's work averaged for three or four years something like fifteen hours (I have known it expand into an unbroken forty-eight), or should I try to assess what our vocation really meant to us all when the Birmingham townsmen thought of us, when they thought of us at all, which it must be allowed was but rarely, as the young fanatics who nursed unaccountable designs in Station Street? Perhaps the incidents first; the wider public may not take me, but my friends will remember them. When I think of our theatre, I mostly do not think of the struggle, the achievement, the mistakes and the beauty that it saw; these are for the finer moments of recollection that life, if it

is to keep alive, must not too frequently indulge, since nothing destroys the reality of the present so adroitly as too easy a subjection to the past. We most constructively remember what we seem to forget. And so I think back to stray gestures and accidents of temper that for some reason bit into my recollection among far more significant events.

I remember, for example, how well F. A. Besant Rice served our inexperience at a time when as 'The Pilgrim Players' we had little but ardour for equipment, by teaching us something of the stage mechanics that he had learnt in that place of skulls, as we derided it, the London Commercial Theatre; but what I really remember about him is that he always wore lemon-coloured gloves at rehearsals and smoked cheroots of an individual savour, and that he once drew from Foden Flint, most determined and surprising of stage managers, the proud last word to an altercation about Jack Barthwick's nutcrackers: 'I am fully aware, Mr. Rice, that you have the social disadvantage of me.' Foden Flint himself put more solid work into his two years of stage management (his prompt-books were like mediaeval missals) than most London stage managers would put into a decade, and yet I remember chiefly that he was the only member of the company who persevered with his foils, to become later, I believe, runner-up in the amateur championship, and that on one occasion when I wanted a fountain to play in Lorenzo's moonlight he

magnificently lay under the stage on his back and blew water up through a piece of iron tubing for fifteen minutes at each performance.

When young men in London, fresh from school, announce that they are willing to oblige by walking on and understudying for seven pounds a week, I am a little impatient when I think of Billy Haines and Joseph Dodd—peace be with those gentle and devoted comedians—and W. J. Rea, and Stuart Vinden and Felix Aylmer and Scott Sunderland, and what work they did in those days for what wages. In the fourth season of the theatre I find that these six players, whom I name indifferently, though with no indifference of affection, took between them one hundred and twenty-two parts, each of them covering a wide range, Haines for example playing Mr. Retville and O'Trigger, Dodd Falstaff and Petkoff, Rea Duncan and Santa Claus, Vinden Bluntschli and Shylock, Aylmer Kira and Lord Illingworth, and Sunderland Orlando and Will Munt. Here again was training such as the old travelling stock companies gave to men like Mr. Allan Aynesworth and Mr. Lyall Swete, and a score of other London actors who learnt their job before dictating terms about it. When Rea played Abraham Lincoln at Hammersmith most of the critics spoke of him as though he had taken to acting about a week ago with surprisingly good results. In the three years preceding that occasion he had played thirty-six parts in Birmingham.

And yet, again, when I think of these and other old friends, it is often less of the zeal and beauty of their many performances, than of some turn or another that they gave to those same trivial fond records. Sometimes, for example, when I think of William Armstrong (Wally, now glorious in Liverpool) I remember his exquisite Pierrot in *The Merry Death*, but I never fail to recall the conclusion of the dress rehearsal of *The Misfortune of Being Clever*, when after several hours of histrionic debauch in which he essayed Tchatsky, the hero of that classic Russian comedy, he faded away to his dressing-room, and I crept up after him to announce that Mr. Griboyedov was downstairs and would like to see him. For one miserable moment he forgot that that eminent dramatist had been safely in his grave these hundred years, and rose forlornly from his basket chair, as pitiful a spectacle of broken manhood as ever looked upon the wrath to come. How imposing is the list of parts to the credit of Scott Sunderland, the William Terriss, the Lewis Waller, the Lionel Barrymore of our company, and with what flourish and gusto he played them ; but did he not also once make an excursion into business management ?—and did we not thereupon make an excursion to Ludlow—or was it Ledbury or Leominster ?—and did one citizen of whichever it was come to see our pastoral playing ? No, not one.

And so with all those happy, fruitful comradeships.

I wonder whether Bache Matthews has pointed out how peculiarly exacting repertory work is upon the women of the company, who have relatively so little range of make-up and disguise to help them week by week in keeping fresh their contact with the audience, whether he has paid a special tribute to the work in those years of Mary Raby and Cecily Byrne, and Cathleen Orford and Maud Gill and Margaret Chatwin. Margaret Chatwin I have always considered to have a greater purely tragic power than any other English actress of my generation. Her intellectual control did not perhaps quite match her superb rhythmic sense of poetry and character, otherwise she would have been, as Broadway has it, a world beater. But many of her performances when I was at the theatre were magnificent ; she played Constance and Medea and Ygraine and Nan, and a long series of such parts that need immense emotional staying power (Granville-Barker once spoke to me of actors who can do this sort of thing as fifth act men), in a manner that I am convinced would have earned a curtsey from Mrs. Siddons. Also Margaret Chatwin spoke blank verse better than any actress I have heard, though at times perhaps she put one for a moment in mind of the player at the Abbey Theatre of whom Mr. Yeats told me that he spoke a speech of his, celebrating the heroes of Irish legend, so movingly that he asked him whether he had any peculiar tenderness in his mind for these men, to be

informed by the player that he had supposed the names to be those of mountains. Sometimes, indeed, Miss Chatwin was not only divided in her mind as to what her words meant, she was uncertain, how surprisingly all repertory players will know, as to what her words were. And so she too has her less majestic moments in my remembrance ; twenty minutes, to be exact, when I lay concealed in acute discomfort within the confines of an oak settle upon which she sat through a scene taking from me what she could of the true text of a *Merry Wife of Windsor*.

One ghost calls up another. Myself playing opposite, as they say, Ivor Barnard on the first night of Lascelles Abercrombie's *Adder*, grievously under-rehearsed, leading him slowly across the stage towards the prompter to the measure of the dialogue, leading him finally off the stage altogether into the prompter's lap ; myself, again, sitting with Ion Swinley into the small hours of the morning at Number Six (an eating place, cheap and substantial, memorable for such baked jam roll and cream as never was) and trying to Pelmanise his tired brain, tired with the triumphs of a long season, into familiarity with Mr. Masfield's *Kurano*, whom indeed he never knew but played with a very perfect imagination. I see, too, those successors to Foden Flint : Frank Clewlow, who had the inexplicable gift of being able to glance at the stage a minute before the curtain rose and knowing to a flower-pot whether Covent Garden was rightly set,

and who yet on one occasion in a play of my own left the one essential thing off the stage, a trifle of a grandfather's clock ; and after him Esmé Filmer, whose knowledge of what in the jargon is called period was so disconcerting, who would search all the Birmingham boweries for a fanstick, and who will be rewarded in Paradise by directing an eternal season of Spanish drama. And Gilbert Cannan I remember in the theatre, where in *Everybody's Husband* he wrote one of the best short plays of our time, and where he demonstrated that a professed and distinguished critic of the stage can upon occasion become the world's worst actor.

And then, Barry Jackson himself. The accident of separation has not diminished our friendship ; nothing could do that. But we who now see each other only at too long intervals, were for some ten years building our youth and our lives together, day in and day out, and for many hours each day, acting together, rehearsing, scheming, fighting, failing, and succeeding together. I will not try to measure what I owe him, but I may gratefully claim that among the great company of his debtors, a hundred players, the citizens of a great city, and all well-wishers of the English theatre, there is no man who owes him more than I do. And of that friendship again, as of the others, of its struggles and intimacies, there are the unexpected moments that, if not at heart more deeply cherished than the long adventurous routine that was

the foundation of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre's history, are at least more easily talked about. Does he, I wonder, remember the closing scene of a performance at the Edgbaston Assembly Rooms, nearly twenty years ago now, when he and I as God and Everyman waited for the audience to leave so that we could come forth from the grave and the cloud, waited in vain, as it seemed in eternity truly, while the people did not move, until one devout enthusiast came out and knelt at the stage front in prayer, and another, it was Mr. Max Mossell, stood up and roundly declared that he would give twenty pounds to the funds of a society that stood for brighter Birmingham to such a tune? And does he remember that other occasion when we held the stage together, in the real theatre in Station Street this time, and when as I did my nimblest with one of Shakespeare's longer speeches he explained to me in detailed circumstance, and hardly less audible than myself to the audience, how that the gentleman on the perch had fainted from excess of beer and in the process had contrived to set the tormentor on fire?<sup>1</sup> And does he remember meeting me on the dressing-room stairs after my first performance of Edward Voysey, which I took to be one of my best efforts, and

<sup>1</sup> A tormentor, it may be said for the layman, is the narrow hanging curtain that skirts the proscenium frame. It is one of many terms, such as batten and float and short line and cleat and scrim, invented by stage carpenters to keep producers in their place.

congratulating me on having successfully learnt so long a part ?

And so I close, with little encroachment upon the more serious history that Bache Matthews will have told. But in parting I should like to say one word of greeting to the audience that through those years were our loyal friends, many of them friends of my own loving remembrance. And first one's impulse at this moment is to speak reproachfully to them, as of a trust betrayed. They have allowed the Station Street theatre to be closed, have paid Barry Jackson for the devotion of the third of a lifetime with an affront that would have broken the heart of a man less brave. And then one remembers that it is not the audience, the people who came, who have done this, but the people who stayed away, and these are no friends of ours or mine, nor, let it be said, of Birmingham. And now as I write this I hear of the fresh start that is being made, the gathering of the faithful in a new determination that a disgrace shall be removed from a city that is proud to tell how that its armorial watchword is 'Forward.' I wish them luck, forbidding a rather sad fear from my heart. I hope the courage of the thousand may persuade the other million people of Birmingham that at a yearly cost of a penny a head they can save themselves from a very pitiful place in theatrical history.

*A CRITICISM*

(By E. MIDDLETON-WATKINS, Birmingham Dramatic  
Critic of the *Daily News*)

I once tried to outline *Back to Methuselah* in half a column, but that was not nearly so difficult as the task now before me. In a short article I have to pronounce an opinion on a whole world ; for to me the Birmingham Repertory Theatre means a whole world, peopled by the creations of Shaw, Ibsen, and Shakespeare. Even with unlimited space I doubt whether I could adequately record my impressions of that world. As it is, I can only express—and attempt to justify—my conviction that the Birmingham Repertory Theatre is the most important institution in this country.

‘Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright or a carpenter?’ If Hamlet had arrived a few minutes earlier at Ophelia’s graveside he might have capped the wit of the gravediggers with a wise solution to their riddle : ‘The dramatist, for the plays he builds last till the golden time when man will understand his own nature without a mirror.’ Drama is the art which embraces, and so surpasses, all the other arts. Its spoken words are more powerful than print ; its interplay of emotion and idea contains a deeper harmony than any music ; in its mirror we see ourselves, not statically posed as in painting and sculpture, but

real, moving, alive ; its sermons, suiting the action to the word, are more inspiring than any pulpit oration. That is why the home of such an art seems to me far more important than any library or concert hall or art gallery or church. And almost the only temple of this art which has not been violated by the money-changers is the Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

Without belittling the heroic ventures of isolated producers, or forgetting the work of other provincial repertory theatres, one can pick out the Birmingham 'Rep' as the one theatre which has firmly established itself and attained something like popularity on the policy of producing every kind of play except bad ones. Ultimately this is, I think, the soundest of all policies, and because it is run on this principle the 'Rep' must outlast its rivals of the commercial theatre, which are run on no principle at all.

The movement of which the Repertory Theatre is the pioneer will flourish when musical comedy, with its tinsel and its tedium, has perished—as sooner or later it must perish, like the drama of Sardou, from its own deadly dullness.

The principle of pleasing the public taste is foolishness. The public has no taste, except where there are Barry Jacksons to create and foster it. The founder of the 'Rep' gives us the fruits of genius. He has no silly notions of giving the public what it wants, because he realizes that the public does not know what it wants until the dramatist has shown it. What

the human soul seeks is a mystery but painfully and partially divined by the greatest artists, not the open secret of a few base-minded adventurers. (Before Charlie Chaplin became the most popular artist in the world, was there a 'public demand' for a bowler-hatted, slop-trousered clown with a disarming smile?)

Mr. Barry Jackson, of course, makes his mistakes. He not only startles us by suddenly revealing the vitality of a forgotten Ibsen play; he also bores us on occasion with an attempt to put life into a Victorian or Elizabethan corpse which would be better left decently in the grave. One week he takes a Shaw fantasia which London has dropped in bewilderment and shows it to be one of the great plays of the age; the next he employs the precious talents of the same company in the pretentiously futile experiment of acting Shakespeare's worst tragedy in modern clothes.

But what of that? If the pioneer climbs the greatest heights, it is but natural that he must also fall into some queer pitfalls now and then. We should rather admire Mr. Jackson's courage in adhering, in the main, to his principle, than grumble at his occasional lapses and eccentric stunts. If he and his company had given us nothing but *Heartbreak House* and *The Immortal Hour* our gratitude should eclipse our criticisms. And when criticism has had its say the Birmingham Repertory is still the theatre into which we can go with a strong hope of being moved by the real thing, and almost a dead certainty

of being interested. The company's acting is sometimes masterly, generally sound, and never slipshod ; and the list of plays which they have made live, ranging from Euripides to Eden Phillpotts, is unrivalled in this country.

The 'Rep's' existence and growing popularity is the most hopeful sign of our hopeless times. Wit may have vanished from our conversation, wisdom from our schools, religion from our churches, and honesty of purpose from our conduct ; but we need not despair so long as these things are being kept alive by the drama—on the stage of the Repertory Theatre.

Even if my conviction were not supported by the success of the company's recent ventures in London, I should still believe in the ultimate triumph of the 'Rep,' not merely as an art movement, but as a popular institution. It is, more than any others, the kind of theatre which Shaw meant when he wrote : 'Whatever Bastille fall, the theatre will stand.'

### *AN IMPRESSION*

By R. H. COATS, M.A.

It has been my privilege to watch closely and sympathetically the growth of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre since its inception in 1913. I look back upon its achievements during this period with the greatest admiration, and with the sure con-

viction that history will assign to this theatre, and especially to Mr. Barry Jackson, a prominent place in that general movement of re-awakened interest in the drama which has marked the last thirty years.

I would group my impressions of our Repertory Theatre under four heads :

(1) *Artistic Idealism.* From the first it has been recognized that drama is an art-form not inferior in dignity to music, painting, poetry, sculpture, and architecture ; and that in consequence the theatre is to be regarded primarily as a temple of art, and not merely as a place of entertainment or a platform for the airing of social theories. At much sacrifice of popularity, and no doubt of fortune, Mr. Barry Jackson has consistently held to his artistic ideals and made them dominate every detail of his productions. The turning of the foyer of the theatre into an attractive picture-gallery and the choosing of music to suit the play, illustrate this point.

(2) *Catholicity of Taste.* No one can say that the theatre has been run by cranks. All schools have been represented, and we have had the best of everything—the classicism of Euripides, the romanticism of Barrie, the naturalism of Zola, the realism of Ibsen, the symbolism of Yeats and Maeterlinck, the didacticism of Shaw. It has been an inestimable boon to have this ample variety brought before us. One cannot glance over the list of plays produced at the theatre without feeling how astonishing must have been the

company's resources, how virile their optimism, how lofty their aims, and how educative their influence in Birmingham for nearly twelve years.

(3) *Efficiency in Acting*. The catholicity above spoken of has made great demands upon the actors, but it has also brought out their powers in a marked degree, and developed among them a co-operative spirit and an absence of the desire for personal prominence which are of the essence of good drama. The penalty, alas, which we have had to pay for this has been that promising young actors, who have received their training at the Repertory Theatre, have afterwards been lost to us, and have leapt into fame elsewhere.

(4) *Courageous Enterprise*. The Repertory Theatre has commendably avoided the danger of getting into ruts and has constantly experimented in interesting new directions. Whatever criticisms may be made on other grounds, it must surely be admitted that the theatre which has produced *Romeo and Juliet* without cuts, and *Cymbeline* with characters wearing modern dress ; which has given us, in addition to spoken drama, the wordless play *L'Enfant Prodigue*, and operas by Mozart and Sheridan, Dame Ethel Smyth, and Mr. Rutland Boughton ; which has delighted and surprised us with ballets and other novelties in children's pantomimes almost every Christmas ; which maintained for a year so excellent a periodical as *The Gong* ; and which has always adorned the hoardings

of Birmingham with really artistic posters, is at least tingling with *vitality*.

To one who, like myself, can look back to the early days of 'The Pilgrim Players,' the advance made by the Repertory Theatre is most encouraging. Much of the work done hitherto, of course, has been educative. The theatre has had to call into existence its own special audience, and then train it, but the flourishing condition of the Playgoers' Society (the best possible evidence of a permanently interested public) shows how successfully this has been done.

It is gratifying that interest is beginning to spread to wider circles. As one of the English Literature tutors of the Workers' Educational Association, I have been privileged to bring as many as a hundred of my students to *Heartbreak House* and *Gas*. In every case, as subsequent essay-writing and class discussion have proved, these students, most of them working people from the Black Country, came away astonished, delighted, and deeply impressed. I am convinced that the most loyal and intelligent supporters of the Repertory Theatre must increasingly be drawn from the middle and upper working classes. Something should surely be done, perhaps along the lines of Adult School and other Musical Competition Festivals, to enlist their interest and support. I would suggest, too, that elder scholars in schools might be encouraged to frequent the theatre. We must recognize that nowadays legitimate drama has to

compete, not only with the cinema, but also with the growing popularity of wireless—that indulgent friend to lazy, stay-at-home enjoyment.

The promoters of the Repertory movement in Birmingham have ploughed a peculiarly stiff soil for many years. But they have generously sown, in the furrows they have turned over, an abundance of good seed. The promises are bright of a rich harvest.

### *SOME IMPRESSIONS*

By R. SPEARS, of the Workers' Educational Association

In estimating the influence of such an institution as the Repertory Theatre, it is obvious that the layman, who predominates in the audience, is the one best fitted to judge of the extent of that influence; however ignorant he may be of dramatic technique and of the trials of the producer, he knows how the plays affect him personally, and from conversation with his fellows can obtain a fairly accurate idea of their general opinion. It will be convenient, for the purposes of this paper, to offer a comparison of the Repertory Theatre with the ordinary theatre of any large town.

From gay posters announcing the Special Personal Visit of this or that more or less talented artiste in his or her favourite (and frequently inane or grossly sentimental) play, it was with a sense of relief that one turned to the neat announcements of the Repertory

Theatre, that a new play would be performed apparently without the assistance of any such Shining Personage. One discovered that the chief person connected with a Repertory play was the author, those gigantic figures, the producer and his associates, the proprietor and actor-manager, being completely obscured.

Outside the building in Station Street one was struck by the absence of queues, of rows of 'early doors,' of hawkers, beggars, and musicians (?). In the entrance hall one sought in vain for the opulent ornamentation, the double staircase with its blazing carpet. On entering the auditorium one felt that there must be some mistake : no plaster cherubs with their gilt peeling, no nameless atrocities of female figures bearing unrecognizable instruments, no heavy gold-corded curtains, no familiar notices pointing to the various bars (the most important places, apparently, in the ordinary theatre) ; all the seats in tiers ; no supporting pillars for the balcony, so that every one could see the stage ; everything a restful brown ; nothing to distract the eye from watching the performance : even the minor impositions for early door seats, for cloakrooms and programmes, were absent. Though desiring to provide their audience with intellectually and emotionally satisfying drama, the theatre did not forget that physical comfort is a necessity to sustained enjoyment of any kind and gave every spectator a comfortable seat at a reasonable price.

With regard to the standard of dramatic work, one was at once struck by the vastness of the gulf between the type of entertainment in vogue at the average theatre and the plays performed by the Repertory Company. For weeks on end there would be nothing but the most insipid productions at the other Birmingham theatres, whereas at the 'Rep' there would be Ibsen, Galsworthy, Shakespeare, Shaw, Barrie, Barker, etc. One awaited with impatience the next delightful production and very rarely did one say, 'I do not wish to see that play again.' Although the Repertory Theatre occasionally lapsed (usually in the Summer Season) into plays of less merit, they never produced an entirely worthless, platitudinous or suggestive play—a maintenance of high class drama which stands to their everlasting credit. A commercial enterprise, they never descended to the level of other theatres to entice an indifferent public into their building.

One always had, at the Repertory Theatre, a sense of witnessing a thoroughly conscientious interpretation of the dramatist's work, whether in the scenery, the costumes, or the aesthetic or propagandist content of the drama. One did not see the shabby-genteel ducal apartments to which one is accustomed on the stage, nor gardens like a public tip, bearing the invisible notice, 'Greenery may be shot here,' nor those fearful and wonderful woodland scenes reminiscent of rows of mutilated park-railings: one recalls

with pleasure the fact that one never seemed to see the same scenery in two different plays, a fine tribute to the artistic conscientiousness of Mr. Paul Shelving.

The costumes, too, were always just what was needed. A simple country maiden was attired as such, not in a last year's morning frock, high-heeled suède shoes, silk stockings, and shingled hair. On the other hand, a king in his robes of state was royally clad, not in what appeared to be a bandsman's pre-war uniform. The *dramatis personae* really 'dressed the part.'

As regards the acting considered as a whole, one was struck by the faithfulness with which the actors adhered to the playwright's conception of his characters. The 'team-work' of the Repertory players contrasted favourably with the usual arrangement of one (or at most two) artistes surrounded by an array of very unimportant persons. Further, the elocution very rarely left anything to be desired, and one was not compelled to be continually straining the ear to hear speeches uttered in a minor key.

It was, indeed, this ever-present sense of the treatment of the play as an organic whole, as a continuous dynamic representation, which made an attendance at the theatre so satisfying to one's most critical faculties. One could not but take the keenest interest in whatever drama was being acted, even though the author's attitude was completely hostile to one's own.

After the foregoing remarks it may seem a little uncharitable to say that certain performances were rather disappointing, but in these cases the fault lay most usually with the play rather than with the production. It is with the most pleasant memories, however, that we look back upon the majority of plays witnessed at the Repertory Theatre, whether those of Shakespeare the poet, Barrie the romantic, Shaw the satirist, Eden Phillpotts the humorist, or Ibsen the realist. The concluding plays performed at the theatre seem to have been the most delightful, whether it is that we remember them better than those of earlier years, or whether that they were possessed of the most subtle but universal appeal.

*Gas* was performed with that high standard of artistic finish that distinguishes Repertory Theatre productions, so that the artistes show genuine understanding and sympathy with the author's attitude, rather than using his incidents as opportunities for an exhibition of their personal talents. With a large cast, the parts allotted to many of the performers were necessarily slight, whilst the major part of the burden fell on Mr. Cedric Hardwicke, the billionaire's son and protagonist of Kaiser's attack on the commercial attitude. Nevertheless it was interesting to notice how the three bereaved women contrived to assert their individual expression of almost identical passions, and how the workmen employed a variety of inflexions,

attitudes and modes of appeal when all were confronted with the same problem.

The dramatic effect of the play was very materially enhanced by the stage effects. It was interesting to observe another example of the growing tendency for scenery to depart from the realistic to the impressionistic style. In Act I. the view, first of the lighted factory with the chimney-stacks belching flame into the purple night and later of the hideously distorted window frames (not shattered as frames actually would be after an explosion, but suggestive of the result of a liberation of terrific devastating forces) had a potent effect in aiding the spectator to measure the extent of the catastrophe. In the final act also, the wrecked gate thrust cornerwise into the air, the broken wheel and jagged fragments of masonry and metalwork, and in the background the massive pile of buildings nearly blotting out the light, all served to heighten the illusion of utter destruction and chaos.

The further concomitants of suddenly arrested music, of the failure of the dynamos, of the awful blackness and explosion, followed by the tinkling of smashed glass and the deathly stillness could not but excite in the audience many of the emotions that reigned in the hearts of the characters.

*The Farmer's Wife* was undoubtedly the most laughable play we ever witnessed at the Repertory Theatre and probably in any other. Not only was it pure comedy of the highest order, untouched with

any suspicion of the author's predilections for melodrama, but the acting, particularly that of Miss Maud Gill, Mr. Cedric Hardwicke, and Mr. Wallace Evennett, was a triumph of characterization. On both occasions that we were present the performance was a sheer delight, and would have inspired the most *blasé* theatre-goer to return, bringing with him friends who had hitherto lived in ignorance of the overflowing humour of *The Farmer's Wife*.

With regard to *Back to Methuselah* we can truly say, without any attempt to place Shaw beyond the range of criticism, that after the curtain fell on 'As Far as Thought can Reach,' we felt that we had encountered an entirely new experience in our existence as an ordinary lover of good drama. We cannot too much admire the courage of Mr. Barry Jackson, of Mr. Ayloff, and of all those concerned in the production of a play of such unprecedented length and of such intellectual and vital import. The expectations aroused by reading were far transcended by the actual performance, which so adequately conveyed the sense of spaciousness in this remarkable play.

The competence and feeling with which the drama was represented could not have failed to please any but the most case-hardened critic. One man there was who lifted up his voice in derision, who shut his eyes and ears to the beauty, to the intense significance of the play and to the earnestness and sincerity of its

author, but it is doubtful whether his attitude was due to soul-deafness, to a distorted sense of humour, or merely to his position as dramatic critic to the most popular of our English newspapers.

However violently one might disagree with the Shavian philosophy, with Shavian gibes at the average politician, with the criticisms of current scientific tenets, with the outline of the future of mankind, even with the purely dramatic construction of the 'Meta-biological Pentateuch'(!), one could not but admire the fecundity of ideas, the outspoken sentiments and eager quest of truth in a man who, while disclaiming rhetoric and fine language, can make his characters speak in clear-cut, beautiful prose ; who regards sheer physical beauty and the beauty of music and of line as far less attractive than mental explorations, and yet ends his play with the moving, poetic speech of Lilith ; the man who can envisage humanity as a whole and can feel the throb of the evolutionary process ; the man who can paint us such bold and strangely affecting pictures of the time unborn.

Having attempted, rather imperfectly, to crystallize our impressions of the theatre and its activities, we would state in conclusion our opinion of the effect that the theatre has had on the citizens of Birmingham and its environs. Whilst admitting that the circle of admirers of the best in art is ever small and that appreciation of subtleties of thought and word is even rarer than a love of fine music, painting or sculpture,

we think, nevertheless, that the number of individuals attending the Repertory Theatre was continually increasing. Without doubt audiences would have been much larger had this theatre been able to profit to the same extent as the others by a war which drove thousands of people to performances which demanded no output of mental energy, and had not the post-war trade depression adversely affected theatres in all parts of the country.

The Repertory Theatre has enabled many of us to see plays which no ordinary 'place of entertainment' would have attempted to produce. It has contributed to that gradual improvement in public taste which is to be brought about only by educational influences, of which the theatre should be one of the most potent. It has helped many of us to a fuller understanding of human nature, to a realization of the necessity for changes in the majority of our firmly established customs and institutions, and has ministered to our intellectual and aesthetic needs in the most direct manner possible.

It was our personal experience in very many instances that a visitor for the first time would be so charmed that he would thereafter always go to the Repertory Theatre rather than to any other. Not only was the interior of the theatre, the arrangement of stage and orchestra, etc., admired, but most frequently the play would open up a new world of ideas to a newcomer.

As one of those who regarded the choice of dramas as sometimes injudicious, we might add that we would rather have seen, say, Toller's *Masse-Mensch* or *The Machine Wreckers*, than Kaiser's *Gas*, and were always hoping to see the Capeks' *Insect Play* when a propagandist work was being chosen. At the same time we should like to express our appreciation of Mr. Jackson's principle of trying plays by new or little-known authors, particularly in the early days of the theatre.

After noticing the proposed programme for the Winter Session, we devoutly hope that the Repertory Theatre will re-open, for we fully endorse the views of those who regard the closing of the Repertory Theatre as a civic calamity. We have at least decided not to be of the weaker brethren who postpone the day when Birmingham will once more have a Repertory Company of its own.

## APPENDICES

- (a) PLAYS PRODUCED BY 'THE PILGRIM PLAYERS.'
- (b) LIST OF 'THE PILGRIM PLAYERS.'
- (c) PLAYS PRODUCED AT THE BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY  
THEATRE.
- (d) THE BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE 'WHO'S  
WHO.'



## APPENDIX A

### PLAYS PRODUCED BY 'THE PILGRIM PLAYERS'

PLAY.	AUTHOR.	PRODUCER.	Date of First Performance.	Number of Performances.
1. The Interlude of Youth	—	Jackson & Pinchard	Oct. 2, 1907	28
2. Eager Heart . . .	E. A. Buckton .	Pinchard .	Dec. 21, 1907	15
3. The Two Gentlemen of Verona	Wm. Shakespeare	Pinchard .	Apl. 27, 1908	8
4. The Importance of Being Earnest	Oscar Wilde . .	Pinchard .	Oct. 10, 1908	13
5. The Scornful Lady .	Beaumont & Fletcher	Pinchard & Jackson	Apl. 22, 1909	7
6. Fifi Nella . . .	Barry V. Jackson (music by Ed. Prosser)	Jackson .	Apl. 5, 1910	5
7. The King's Threshold	W. B. Yeats .	Pinchard .	Feb. 25, 1910	5
8. Press Cuttings . .	Bernard Shaw .	Jackson .	Feb. 25, 1910	4
9. Measure for Measure	Wm. Shakespeare	Pinchard .	Apl. 22, 1910	5
10. Admiral Guinea. .	Henley & Stevenson	—	Nov. 5, 1910	5
11. The Fantasticks .	Edmond Rostand (tr. by George Fleming)	Pinchard .	Dec. 10, 1910	8
12. 'Op o' My Thumb .	F. Fenn & R. Pryce	F. Fenn .	Dec. 10, 1910	3
13. Ser Taldo's Bride .	B. V. Jackson & John Drinkwater	Drinkwater	Jan. 21, 1911	12
14. Everyman . . .	—	Pinchard .	Feb. 10, 1911	7
15. The Garret . . .	W. W. Gibson .	Drinkwater	Mar. 4, 1911	1
16. The Return of the Prodigal	St. John Hankin	Rice . .	Mar. 11, 1911	5

PLAY.	AUTHOR.	PRODUCER.	Date of First Performance.	Number of Performances.
17. King John . . .	Wm. Shakespeare	Pinchard .	Apl. 28, 1911	6
18. The Labyrinth . .	Oliver W. F. Lodge	Drinkwater	Oct. 14, 1911	2
19. Deirdre . . . .	W. B. Yeats .	—	Oct. 28, 1911	6
20. The Mock Doctor .	Fielding (after Molière)	Jackson .	Oct. 28, 1911	6
21. She Stoops to Conquer	Oliver Goldsmith	Jackson .	Nov. 4, 1911	3
22. Cophetua . . . .	John Drinkwater	—	Nov. 18, 1911	3
23. The Silver Box . .	John Galsworthy	Rice . .	Dec. 2, 1911	6
24. Puss in Boots . .	J. Drinkwater .	Drinkwater	Dec. 30, 1911	3
25. An Enemy of the People	Henrik Ibsen .	Rice . .	Feb. 10, 1912	3
26. Womankind . . .	W. W. Gibson .	Drinkwater	Feb. 24, 1912	1
27. How He Lied to Her Husband	Bernard Shaw .	Rice . .	Apl. 13, 1912	2
28. Twelfth Night . .	Wm. Shakespeare	Jackson .	Apl. 25, 1912	3

## APPENDIX B

### LIST OF 'THE PILGRIM PLAYERS'

The following list is probably very incomplete. The original programmes did not bear the names of the actors, and very few records of casts have been preserved. It is probable that the names of many of those who rendered valuable help have been omitted, and to them the author tenders his apologies.

Walter Badham.	A. L. Matthieson.
Vernon Barnett.	Herbert S. Milligan.
W. Brunton.	J. S. Milligan.
S. Caswell.	Frank Moore.
S. J. Clarke.	Arnold Pinchard.
Claude Davis.	Lester Pinchard.
John Drinkwater.	James Prodger.
T. Foden Flint.	F. A. Besant Rice.
Graham Gillam.	Arnold Stevenson.
Claude Graham.	Charles Stuart.
James Holt.	Scott Sunderland.
Barry V. Jackson.	Frank Titterton.
Howard Jennings.	Frank Worrall.
Thomas J. Kennedy.	
Thomas MacNiven.	Miss Elana Aherne.
Herbert Mason.	„ Cicely Byrne.
Bache Matthews.	„ Claire Byrne.

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Miss Margaret Chatwin.

„ Ebbsworth.

„ Edythe Jones.

„ Louise de Lacy.

„ Ruth Nightingale.

„ Cathleen Orford.

Miss Betty Pinchard.

„ Lily Rose.

„ Minnie Suckling.

„ S. Rochelle Thomas.

„ Isabel Thornton.

„ Tyndal.

## APPENDIX C

### PLAYS PRODUCED AT THE BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE

\* For the first time on any stage.

§ For the first time in England.

† For the first time in Birmingham.

*Note.*—When two producers' names are joined by an ' & ' the play was produced by both jointly. When names are marked (a), (b), etc., (a) was producer of the first production, (b) and (c) of revivals. Christian names or initials are given of producers specially engaged, surnames only of members of the company.

AUTHOR AND PLAY.	PRODUCER.	Date of First Performance at B.R.T.	Number of Revivals.	Number of Perform- ances.
Abercrombie, Lascelles				
† <i>The Adder</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	May 17, 1913	0	7
* <i>The End of the World</i> . .	Drinkwater . . .	Sept. 12, 1914	0	7
Aikins, Carroll				
* <i>The God of Gods</i> . . . .	Filmer . . . . .	Nov. 8, 1919	1	20
Andreyev, Leonid				
§ <i>The Dear Departing</i> . . .	Ayliff . . . . .	Sept. 1, 1923	0	14
Anstey, F.				
<i>The Man from Blankley's</i> .	Vinden . . . . .	Oct. 11, 1919	0	14
Baker, Elizabeth				
† <i>Chains</i> . . . . .	Rice . . . . .	Oct. 31, 1914	1	21
* <i>Miss Robinson</i> . . . . .	A. E. Drinkwater	Nov. 9, 1918	0	14
* <i>Over a Garden Wall</i> . . .	Drinkwater & Vinden	Nov. 20, 1915	3	30
* <i>Partnership</i> . . . . .	A. E. Drinkwater	June 2, 1917	1	14
Barker, H. Granville-				
† <i>The Voysey Inheritance</i> . .	(a) Rice . . . . . (b) Filmer . . . . .	— Dec. 6, 1913	1	27

AUTHOR AND PLAY.	PRODUCER.	Date of First Performance at B.R.T.	Number of Revivals.	Number of Performances.
Barrie, Sir James				
<i>Quality Street</i> . . . .	Filmer . . . .	Sept. 3, 1921	1	42
<i>The Admirable Crichton</i> .	Filmer . . . .	Sept. 2, 1922	2	47
<i>The Professor's Love Story</i>	Ayliff . . . .	July 21, 1923	0	27
Beaumont & Fletcher				
<i>The Knight of the Burning Pestle</i>	Nigel Playfair .	Aug. 30, 1919	0	14
Bennett, Arnold				
<i>The Honeymoon</i> . . . .	(a) Drinkwater .	Dec. 8, 1917	1	21
	(b) Jackson			
† <i>What the Public Wants</i> .	Drinkwater . . .	Sept. 22, 1917	0	7
Bennett, Arnold, & Knoblock, Edward				
<i>Milestones</i> . . . . .	Filmer . . . .	Aug. 31, 1918	2	34
Besier, Rudolf				
<i>Don</i> . . . . .	Filmer . . . .	Nov. 6, 1920	1	27
Bickley, Francis				
* <i>A Moment's Giddiness</i> . .	Drinkwater . . .	Nov. 30, 1918	0	7
Björnson				
§ <i>The Newly Married Couple</i>	Vinden . . . .	Mar. 19, 1920	0	8
Bottomley, Gordon				
* <i>King Lear's Wife</i> . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Sept. 25, 1915	0	7
Brown, L. P.				
* <i>The Potter's Shop</i> . . . .	Filmer . . . .	Sept. 4, 1920	0	22
Calderon, George				
† <i>The Fountain</i> . . . . .	Clewlow . . . .	Feb. 26, 1916	0	16
Cannan, Gilbert				
* <i>Everybody's Husband</i> . . .	(a) Cannan . . .	Apl. 14, 1917	2	18
	(b) Ayliff			
† <i>James and John</i> . . . . .	Cannan . . . .	June 16, 1917	0	8
† <i>Miles Dixon</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater & Vinden	Feb. 18, 1914	0	6
Carrol, Lewis				
(Dramatized by S. S. B.)				
<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Dec. 26, 1918	0	44
Castell, C.A.				
* <i>The Battle of the Pump</i> . .	Swinley . . . .	Sept. 25, 1915	2	17
Chapin, Harold				
† <i>Augustus in Search of a Father</i>	(a) Rice . . . .	Sept. 20, 1913	3	29
	(b) Clewlow			
† <i>The Marriage of Columbine</i>	Ayliff . . . .	June 10, 1922	0	14

AUTHOR AND PLAY.	PRODUCER.	Date of First Performance at B.R.T.	Number of Revivals.	Number of Performances.
Chapin, Harold— <i>continued</i>				
† <i>The New Morality</i> . . .	Ayliff . . . .	Mar. 18, 1922	2	42
Chatwin, L. B.				
* <i>re Pilgrimage</i> . . . .	Rice . . . .	June 14, 1913	0	7
Chesterton, G. K.				
† <i>Magic</i> . . . . .	Ayliff . . . .	Nov. 5, 1923	0	20
Coleby, W. T.				
<i>Their Point of View</i> . . .	Rice . . . .	June 21, 1913	1	15
Colman, Geo., & Garrick, David				
<i>The Clandestine Marriage</i>	Jackson . . . .	June 12, 1915	1	38
Conrad, Joseph				
† <i>One Day More</i> . . . .	Drinkwater . .	Sept. 21, 1918	0	7
D'Annunzio, Gabriele				
† <i>The Dream of a Spring Morning</i>	Filmer . . . .	Oct. 29, 1921	0	14
Davies, H. H.				
<i>The Mollusc</i> . . . . .	Stanley Drewitt .	Feb. 17, 1919	0	14
Dearmer, Mabel				
† <i>Kit and the Cockyolly Bird</i> .	Jackson . . . .	Dec. 27, 1920	0	24
Dekker, Thomas				
<i>The Shoemaker's Holiday</i> .	Filmer . . . .	Nov. 25, 1922	0	14
Drinkwater, John				
* <i>Abraham Lincoln</i> . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Oct. 12, 1918	2	55
* <i>Cophetua</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Oct. 27, 1917	0	6
† <i>Mary Stuart</i> . . . . .	Ayliff . . . .	May 19, 1923	0	15
* <i>Puss in Boots</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Dec. 26, 1916	0	57
* <i>Rebellion</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater & Vinden	May 2, 1914	0	14
* <i>The God of Quiet</i> . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Oct. 7, 1916	1	15
* <i>The Storm</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	May 8, 1915	3	28
* <i>X=O, A Night of the Trojan War</i>	Drinkwater . . .	Apl. 14, 1917	2	21
Dumas, Alexander				
<i>The Corsican Brothers</i> . . .	Clewlow . . . .	Nov. 24, 1917	0	6
Dunsany, Lord				
† <i>A Night at an Inn</i> . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Feb. 16, 1918	0	7
† <i>The Glittering Gate</i> . . . .	Filmer . . . .	Sept. 13, 1919	0	14
Echegary, Jose. (Trans. by Christopher Sandeman & D. Manuel Gonzalez)				
† <i>The Cleansing Stain</i> . . . .	Filmer . . . .	Sept. 21, 1920	0	13

AUTHOR AND PLAY.	PRODUCER.	Date of First Performance at B.R.T.	Number of Revivals.	Number of Performances.
Euripides. (Trans. by Gilbert Murray)				
† <i>Medea</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Nov. 11, 1913	1	7
<i>The Trojan Women</i> . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Apl. 6, 1918	0	7
Evreinov, Nicholas				
† <i>A Merry Death</i> . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Oct. 26, 1916	1	14
Farjeon, Herbert, & Horsnell, Horace				
* <i>Advertising April</i> . . .	Filmer . . . . .	Dec. 9, 1922	1	27
Ferguson, J. A.				
† <i>Campbell of Kilmhor</i> . . .	Moore . . . . .	Feb. 19, 1921	1	25
Fisher, Daisy				
* <i>Cinderella</i> . . . . .	Daisy Fisher . . .	Dec. 26, 1914	0	31
Foote, Samuel				
<i>The Lyar</i> . . . . .	Dodd . . . . .	Sept. 18, 1914	1	14
Forrest, Charles				
* <i>The Cobbler's Shop</i> . . .	Clewlow . . . . .	Sept. 18, 1915	1	15
Francis, J. O.				
† <i>Change</i> . . . . .	(a) Drinkwater . . . (b) Filmer . . . .	Sept. 8, 1917	1	22
† <i>The Poacher</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Oct. 30, 1915	0	14
Galsworthy, John				
† <i>Foundations</i> . . . . .	Filmer . . . . .	Sept. 30, 1922	0	14
<i>Strife</i> . . . . .	Stanley Drewitt . .	Dec. 5, 1914	0	15
† <i>The Pigeon</i> . . . . .	Rice . . . . .	Feb. 22, 1913	2	12
† <i>The Eldest Son</i> . . . . .	Rice . . . . .	Aug. 29, 1914	0	7
† <i>The Silver Box</i> . . . . .	Rice . . . . .	Apl. 5, 1913	5	39
Girvin, Brenda, & Cosens, Monica				
* <i>Wee Men</i> . . . . .	Ayliff . . . . .	Dec. 26, 1923	0	32
Goldsmith, Oliver				
<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i> . . .	Stanley Drewitt . .	Mar. 18, 1913	2	46
<i>The Good-Natured Man</i> . .	Drinkwater . . .	Sept. 16, 1916	0	7
Goodwin, Ernest				
* <i>The Devil Among the Skins</i>	Clewlow . . . . .	May 8, 1915	1	8
Gregory, Lady				
† <i>The White Cockade</i> . . .	Rice . . . . .	May 17, 1913	0	7
<i>The Workhouse Ward</i> . .	Cannan . . . . .	Mar. 24, 1917	1	17
Griboyedov, A. S.				
§ <i>The Misfortune of Being Clever</i>	Drinkwater . . .	Oct. 21, 1916	0	8

AUTHOR AND PLAY.	PRODUCER.	Date of First Performance at B.R.T.	Number of Revivals.	Number of Performances.
Hamilton, Cicely † <i>Just to Get Married</i> . . .	Clewlöw . . .	Feb. 9, 1918	2	21
Hankin, St. John † <i>The Burglar that Failed</i> . .	Rice . . .	Feb. 18, 1913	0	6
† <i>The Cassilis Engagement</i> . .	(a) Rice . . . (b) Jackson . . .	Mar. 22, 1913	9	95
† <i>The Charity that Began at Home</i>	Rice . . .	Jan. 30, 1915	3	37
† <i>The Constant Lover</i> . . .	Drinkwater . . .	June 14, 1913	1	18
† <i>The Last of the De Mullins</i>	Drinkwater . . .	Mar. 2, 1918	0	7
† <i>The Return of the Prodigal</i>	(a) Rice . . . (b) Vinden (c) Ayliff	Sept. 13, 1913	5	48
† <i>The Two Mr. Wetherbys</i> . .	Felix Aylmer . . .	Sept. 18, 1915	0	7
† <i>Thompson</i> (finished by Geo. Calderon)	Drinkwater . . .	Feb. 17, 1917	0	8
Harker, L. Allen, & Prior, F. R. * <i>Her Proper Pride</i> . . . .	Vinden . . .	Mar. 18, 1916	1	15
Hastings, B. Macdonald † <i>The New Sin</i>	Filmer . . .	Sept. 13, 1919	0	14
Henley, W. E., & Stevenson, R. L. <i>Admiral Guinea</i> . . . .	Rice . . .	Oct. 4, 1913	0	7
Heywood, Thomas <i>A Woman Killed with Kindness</i>	Ayliff . . .	Apl. 1, 1922	0	13
Holme, H. E. † <i>High Tea</i> . . . . .	Ayliff . . .	Jan. 20, 1923	0	14
Houghton, Stanley † <i>The Fifth Commandment</i> . .	Rice . . .	Nov. 28, 1914	0	7
Ibsen, Henrik <i>An Enemy of the People</i> . .	Rice . . .	May 10, 1913	0	7
<i>Ghosts</i> . . . . .	Ayliff . . .	Feb. 20, 1922	0	9
<i>Hedda Gabler</i> . . . . .	Filmer . . .	May 12, 1921	0	9
† <i>The Master Builder</i> . . .	Leigh Lovel . . .	Apl. 10, 1915	0	1
<i>Pillars of Society</i> . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Sept. 14, 1918	0	7
† <i>The Wild Duck</i> . . . .	Leigh Lovel . . .	Nov. 21, 1914	0	7
Jackson, B. V. * <i>The Christmas Party</i> . . .	Jackson . . .	Jan. 10, 1914	4	164

AUTHOR AND PLAY.	PRODUCER.	Date of First Performance at B.R.T.	Number of Revivals.	Number of Performances.
Jackson, B. V., & Drinkwater, J. * <i>Ser Taldo's Bride</i> . . . .	Jackson . . . .	June 16, 1913	0	6
Jennings, Gertrude † <i>Five Birds in a Cage</i> . . . .	Clewlow . . . .	Feb. 16, 1918	0	7
Jenssen, H. Wiers. (Trans. by John Masefield) † <i>The Witch</i> . . . . .	Filmer . . . .	Feb. 27, 1920	3	41
Jesse, F. Tennyson, & Harwood, H. M. † <i>The Mask</i> . . . . .	Filmer . . . .	Apl. 30, 1921	1	21
Jones, Henry Arthur <i>The Liars</i> . . . . .	Clewlow . . . .	May 22, 1915	0	14
Jonson, Ben <i>The Alchemist</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . . .	Apl. 8, 1916	0	10
Kaiser, Georg § <i>Gas</i> . . . . .	Ayliff . . . .	Nov. 24, 1923	0	14
Layton, Frank G. * <i>The Black Sheep</i> . . . . .	Rice . . . .	Aug. 29, 1914	0	7
* <i>The Painter and the Baby</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . . .	May 8, 1915	0	7
Longson, E. H. * <i>While Rome Burns</i> . . . .	Drinkwater . . . .	Mar. 10, 1917	0	14
MacEvoy, Charles <i>David Ballard</i> . . . . .	Rice . . . .	Mar. 7, 1914	2	20
† <i>When the Devil was Ill</i> . . . . .	Vinden . . . .	Oct. 2, 1915	1	14
Maeterlinck, Maurice † <i>The Death of Tintagiles</i> . . . .	Drinkwater . . . .	Sept. 20, 1913	1	21
Marshall, Robert <i>His Excellency the Governor</i> . . . .	Rice . . . .	June 6, 1914	0	14
Martin, J. Sackville <i>Cupid and the Styx</i> . . . .	Rice . . . .	Sept. 19, 1914	5	38
Masefield, John * <i>The Faithful</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . . .	Dec. 4, 1915	0	15
* <i>The Sweeps of '98</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . . .	Oct. 7, 1916	1	15
<i>The Tragedy of Nan</i> . . . .	Drinkwater . . . .	Apl. 12, 1913	5	31
Massinger, Philip <i>A New Way to Pay Old Debts</i> . . . .	Drinkwater . . . .	Oct. 24, 1914	0	7
Massingham, Dorothy * <i>Glass Houses</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . . .	Mar. 9, 1914	0	7

AUTHOR AND PLAY.	PRODUCER.	Date of First Performance at B.R.T.	Number of Revivals.	Number of Performances.
Milne, A. A. <i>The Romantic Age</i> . . .	Ayliff . . . .	Jan. 20, 1923	1	29
Molière <i>George Dandin</i> . . . .	Jackson . . . .	Mar. 19, 1920	0	8
<i>The Mock Doctor</i> . . . . (Fielding's Version)	Clewlow . . . .	Mar. 28, 1914	0	7
<i>The Rogueries of Scapin</i> .	Drinkwater . . .	Mar. 9, 1918	0	14
<i>The Would-be Gentleman</i> .	Jackson . . . .	Oct. 8, 1921	0	21
Monkhouse, Allan . . . .				
† <i>The Education of Mr. Surra</i>	Drinkwater . . .	Sept. 23, 1916	0	10
* <i>The Grand Cham's Diamond</i>	Drinkwater . . .	Sept. 21, 1918	0	7
O'Riordan, Conal * <i>His Majesty's Pleasure</i> .	Conal O'Riordan .	Oct. 30, 1915	0	14
Pakington, Mary † <i>The Polar Post</i> . . . .	Ayliff . . . .	Jan. 23, 1922	0	14
Paul, Adolf § <i>The Language of the Birds</i>	Ayliff . . . .	Mar. 31, 1923	0	15
Phillpotts, Eden † <i>Hiatus</i> . . . . .	Clewlow . . . .	Oct. 27, 1917	0	6
* <i>St. George and the Dragons</i>	A. E. Drinkwater	Mar. 30, 1918	1	16
* <i>The Farmer's Wife</i> . . .	A. E. Drinkwater	Nov. 11, 1916	5	96
* <i>The Secret Woman</i> . . .	Filmer . . . .	Oct. 14, 1922	0	14
Pinero, Sir Arthur <i>Dandy Dick</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	June 1, 1918	0	14
<i>Trelawny of the Wells</i> .	Drinkwater . . .	Nov. 10, 1917	1	38
Planché, J. R. <i>The King of the Peacocks</i> .	Jackson . . . .	Dec. 26, 1921	0	24
Richardson, H. M. † <i>Gentlemen of the Press</i> . .	Stanley Drewitt .	Mar. 20, 1919	0	13
Rose, F. A. † <i>The Second Mrs. Banks</i> .	Dodd . . . .	Nov. 14, 1914	0	7
Rostand, Edmond <i>The Fantasticks</i> . . . .	(a) Pinchard . . . (b) Clewlow . . .	June 21, 1913	2	25
Schnitzler, Arthur <i>Anatol—A Farewell Supper</i> (tr. by Granville Barker)	Rice . . . .	Sept. 20, 1913	0	14

AUTHOR AND PLAY.	PRODUCER.	Date of First Performance at B.R.T.	Number of Revivals.	Number of Performances.
Shakespeare, William				
<i>As You Like It</i> . . . .	(a) Harcourt Williams	Feb. 7, 1914	3	34
	(b) Jackson			
<i>Cymbeline</i> . . . . .	Ayliff . . . . .	Apl. 21, 1923	0	15
<i>Henry IV., Part I.</i> . . . .	(a) Pinchard . . . .	Oct. 11, 1913	2	44
	(b) Jackson . . . . .			
<i>Henry IV., Part II.</i> . . . .	Jackson . . . . .	Apl. 23, 1921	0	6
<i>King John</i> . . . . .	Pinchard . . . . .	Apl. 19, 1913	0	5
<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i> . . . .	Jackson . . . . .	Nov. 22, 1919	2	53
<i>Macbeth</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . . . .	Apl. 29, 1916	0	8
<i>Measure for Measure</i> . . . .	Drinkwater . . . . .	Apl. 23, 1918	0	12
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> . . .	Conal O'Riordan . . .	May 3, 1919	1	37
<i>Othello</i> . . . . .	Filmer . . . . .	May 5, 1920	0	20
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> . . . . .	Ayliff . . . . .	May 27, 1922	0	14
<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> . . .	(a) Drinkwater . . . .	June 7, 1913	5	26
	(b) Jackson . . . . .			
<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	(a) Drinkwater . . . .	Apl. 23, 1913	6	55
	(b) Filmer			
<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	Drinkwater . . . . .	June 15, 1918	1	51
<i>The Tempest</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . . . .	Apl. 17, 1915	2	17
<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	Drinkwater . . . . .	Apl. 28, 1917	0	7
<i>Twelfth Night</i> . . . . .	(a) Jackson . . . . .	Feb. 15, 1913	9	76
	(b) Drinkwater			
	(c) Ayliff			
Shaw, Bernard				
<i>Arms and the Man</i> . . . . .	(a) Drinkwater . . . .	June 3, 1916	4	48
	(b) Vinden			
§ <i>Back to Methuselah</i> . . . . .	Ayliff . . . . .	Oct. 9, 1923	0	4
<i>Candida</i> . . . . .	(a) Rice . . . . .	Mar. 1, 1913	6	55
	(b) Ayliff			
<i>Captain Brassbound's Conversion</i>	Filmer . . . . .	Mar. 19, 1921	0	15
† <i>Getting Married</i> . . . . .	Filmer . . . . .	Sept. 17, 1921	2	22
† <i>Heartbreak House</i> . . . . .	Ayliff . . . . .	Mar. 3, 1923	2	23
† <i>How He Lied to Her Husband</i>	Rice . . . . .	Feb. 18, 1914	3	27
<i>Press Cuttings</i> . . . . .	Rice . . . . .	Mar. 29, 1913	0	7

## APPENDIX C

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AUTHOR AND PLAY.	PRODUCER.	Date of First Performance at B.R.T.	Number of Revivals.	Number of Performances.
Shaw, Bernard—continued.				
† <i>The Dark Lady of the Sonnets</i>	Drinkwater . . .	Nov. 14, 1914	0	7
* <i>The Inca of Perusalem</i> . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Oct. 7, 1916	1	15
<i>Widowers' Houses</i> . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Oct. 6, 1917	0	6
<i>You Never Can Tell</i> . . .	Rice . . .	Aug. 30, 1913	4	44
Sheridan, R. B.				
<i>The Critic</i> . . . . .	Clewlöw . . .	Nov. 1, 1913 <sup>1</sup>	3	47
<i>The Duenna</i> . . . . .	Jackson . . .	May 12, 1923	0	7
<i>The Rivals</i> . . . . .	Jackson . . .	Sept. 4, 1915	3	49
<i>The School for Scandal</i> . . .	Jackson . . .	June 21, 1919	1	40
Sierra, G. Martinez. (Trans. by Helen & Harley Granville-Barker)				
† <i>The Romantic Young Lady</i>	Filmer . . .	Feb. 19, 1921	2	47
§ <i>The Two Shepherds</i> . . .	Filmer . . .	Oct. 29, 1921	0	14
de Smet, Robert				
* <i>The Wounded</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Mar. 3, 1917	0	8
Stephenson, B. C., & Scott, Clement				
<i>Diplomacy</i> . . . . .	Ayliff . . .	Dec. 8, 1923	0	16
Strindberg, August				
† <i>The Outlaw</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Mar. 28, 1914	0	7
Swinley, Ion				
* <i>Keepers of the Garden</i> . . .	Swinley . . .	Oct. 9, 1915	0	7
Synge, J. M.				
† <i>Deirdre of the Sorrows</i> . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Nov. 23, 1918	0	7
<i>The Shadow of the Glen</i>	Drinkwater . . .	Oct. 27, 1917	0	6
† <i>The Tinker's Wedding</i> . . .	Maire O'Neill . . .	May 12, 1917	0	7
Tchekov, Anton				
§ <i>The Bear</i> . . . . .	Filmer . . .	Sept. 21, 1918	0	7
§ <i>The Proposal</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Mar. 18, 1916	2	21
Tolstoy, Leo				
§ <i>The First Distiller</i> . . . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Oct. 26, 1916	1	14
Vansittart, Robert				
† <i>The Cap and Bells</i> . . . . .	Rice . . .	Oct. 25, 1913	1	14
Vanbrugh, Sir John				
<i>The Confederacy</i> . . . . .	Filmer . . .	Oct. 4, 1920	1	20

AUTHOR AND PLAY.	PRODUCER.	Date of First Performance at B.R.T.	Number of Revivals.	Number of Performances.
Wilde, Oscar				
<i>A Woman of No Importance</i>	Leigh Lovel . . .	Apl. 3, 1915	2	36
<i>Lady Windermere's Fan</i> . . .	Clewlow . . .	Sept. 1, 1917	1	19
† <i>A Florentine Tragedy</i> . . .	Clewlow . . .	Nov. 14, 1914	0	7
<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>	(a) Rice . . . (b) Jackson (c) Ayliff	Mar. 15, 1913	9	65
Yeats, W. B.				
<i>Countess Cathleen</i> . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Mar. 29, 1913	0	7
<i>The Hour Glass</i> . . .	Drinkwater . . .	Mar. 24, 1917	1	16
Zola, Emile. (Trans. by de Mattos)				
† <i>Thérèse Raquin</i> . . .	Filmer . . .	Apl. 11, 1921	1	14
Anonymous				
<i>Everyman</i> . . . . .	(a) Pinchard . . . (b) Drewitt . . .	Mar. 18, 1913	1	7
<i>The Interlude of Youth</i> . . .	Pinchard . . .	June 14, 1913	0	1
† <i>Christmas Nativity Plays</i> ( <i>Chester Mysteries</i> )	Pinchard . . .	Dec. 20, 1913	0	5
A PLAY WITHOUT WORDS				
Carré, André				
<i>L'Enfant Prodigue</i> . . .	Lucas . . .	June 20, 1922	0	8
OPERAS				
Boughton, Rutland				
† <i>The Immortal Hour</i> . . .	Jackson . . .	June 23, 1921	3	42
Cimarosa				
† <i>Il Matrimonio Segreto</i> . . .	Jackson . . .	June 20, 1921	0	6
Donizetti				
† <i>Don Pasquale</i> . . . . .	Jackson . . .	July 4, 1921	1	8
Mozart				
† <i>Così Fan Tutte</i> . . . . .	Jackson . . .	June 28, 1920	4	16
<i>Don Giovanni</i> . . . . .	Ayliff . . .	July 3, 1922	0	6
Raybould, Clarence				
† <i>The Sumida River</i> . . .	*	Dec. 9, 1916	0	8

\* By permission of Mr. Rutland Boughton the stage scheme and choral movements were those used at the original production at Glastonbury.

## APPENDIX C

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AUTHOR AND PLAY.	PRODUCER.	Date of First Performance at B.R.T.	Number of Revivals.	Number of Performances.
Smyth, Dame Ethel				
* <i>Fête Galante</i> . . . . .	Jackson . . . . .	June 4, 1923	0	14
† <i>The Boatswain's Mate</i> . . . . .	Jackson . . . . .	June 4, 1923	0	14
BALLETS				
Bantock-Lucas				
* <i>The Pierrot of the Minute</i> . . . . .	Lucas . . . . .	Sept. 30, 1922	0	14
Scarlatti-Lucas				
* <i>The Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweep</i>	Lucas . . . . .	Mar. 18, 1922	1	28

## APPENDIX D

### THE BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE 'WHO'S WHO'

The following list does not include actors engaged for London productions or tours who have not been members of the Birmingham Stock Company. The period of engagements with the Repertory Company is shown, and a few of the parts played. These latter have not been selected as the most important but as indicating the actor's versatility.

ARMSTRONG, WILLIAM (Sept. 1916–Feb. 1917).

Honeywood . . .	<i>The Good-Natured Man</i>
Jack Barthwick . .	<i>The Silver Box</i>
Tchatsky. . . .	<i>The Misfortune of Being Clever</i>
Pierrot . . . .	<i>The Merry Death</i>
Henry Coaker . .	<i>The Farmer's Wife</i>
Eugene Marchbanks .	<i>Candida</i>

AYLIFF, H. K.

Stage Director (Jan. to June 1922, and Jan. 1923 to present).

Productions include :—

*Heartbreak House*  
*Back to Methuselah*  
*Gas*  
*Romeo and Juliet*

AYLMER, FELIX (Feb. 1913–May 1917).

Dick Gurville . .	<i>The Tragedy of Nan</i>
Kira . . . .	<i>The Faithful</i>

AYLMER, FELIX—*continued.*

Malvolio . . . .	<i>The Faithful</i>
Subtle . . . .	<i>The Alchemist</i>
Bohun . . . .	<i>You Never Can Tell</i>
Illingworth . . . .	<i>The Woman of No Importance</i>

## BANKS, LESLIE (April–July 1919).

Fellowship . . . .	<i>Everyman</i>
Sebastian . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Don John . . . .	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>
Gratiano . . . .	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
Charles Haslam . . . .	<i>The Honeymoon</i>
Careless . . . .	<i>The School for Scandal</i>

## BARKER, ARTHUR.

Stage Carpenter (July 1913 to present).

## BARNARD, IVOR (Feb. 1913–July 1916).

Wellwyn . . . .	<i>The Pigeon</i>
Gaffer Pearce . . . .	<i>The Tragedy of Nan</i>
Shylock . . . .	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
William . . . .	<i>You Never Can Tell</i>
Lord Ogleby . . . .	<i>The Glandestine Marriage</i>
Sir Anthony Absolute	<i>The Rivals</i>

## BARNETT, ORLANDO (Jan.–May 1922).

Burgess . . . .	<i>Candida</i>
Engstrand . . . .	<i>Ghosts</i>
Sir Anthony Absolute	<i>The Rivals</i>
Friar Lawrence . . . .	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>

## BASSANO, VERA (Sept. 1914–July 1916).

Delia . . . .	<i>The Cobbler's Shop</i>
Alida . . . .	<i>His Majesty's Pleasure</i>
Frances . . . .	<i>The Keepers of the Garden</i>
Harlequin . . . .	<i>The Christmas Party</i>
Martha . . . .	<i>Her Proper Pride</i>

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BELDON, EILEEN (March 1923 to present).

Ellie Dunn . . .	<i>Heartbreak House</i>
Imogen . . .	<i>Cymbeline</i>
Zoo . . .	<i>Back to Methuselah, Part IV.</i>
Donna Louisa . .	<i>The Duenna</i>
Comtesse Zicka . .	<i>Diplomacy</i>
Petronel . . .	<i>The Farmer's Wife</i>

BLAND, ALAN (Aug. 1921 to present).

Editor of *The Gong*, Aug. 1921.

Acting Manager (on tour), Feb. 1923.

Business Manager, Sept. 1923.

Paris . . .	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
Mill . . .	<i>Candida</i>
Don Jose Maria . .	<i>The Two Shepherds</i>

BLY, NICHOLAS (March-June 1917).

The Angel . . .	<i>The Hour Glass</i>
Sir Hugh Evans . .	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
Salvius . . .	<i>X=O</i>

BOWES, ALICE (Feb.-April 1919).

Mrs. Baxter . . .	<i>The Mollusc</i>
Constance . . .	<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>
Miss Prism . . .	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>

BRIGGS, HEDLEY (Dec. 1921 to present).

Juanillo . . .	<i>The Two Shepherds</i>
The Baron . . .	<i>L'Enfant Prodigue</i>
The Fiancé . . .	<i>The Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweep</i>
The Gentleman in White . . .	<i>Gas</i>
Assistant Stage Manager, Aug. 1923.	

BROADBRIDGE, ALMA (March 1918–Feb. 1919).

Muriel . . . . .	<i>Milestones</i>
Helen . . . . .	<i>The Trojan Women</i>
Widow . . . . .	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
Hyacinth . . . . .	<i>The Rogueries of Scapin</i>
Juliet . . . . .	<i>Measure for Measure</i>

BROOKS, ALFRED J. (April 1916–Nov. 1917).

Lorenzo . . . . .	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
Silvius . . . . .	<i>As You Like It</i>
Raleigh . . . . .	<i>The Critic</i>
Bohun . . . . .	<i>You Never Can Tell</i>
James . . . . .	<i>James and John</i>
Harry Trench . . . . .	<i>Widowers' Houses</i>

BRUNTON, W.

Started with 'The Pilgrim Players' and occasionally acted at the Repertory Theatre.

Andrew Aguecheek . . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Morton Kiil . . . . .	<i>An Enemy of the People</i>
Gonzalo . . . . .	<i>The Tempest</i>
M'Comus . . . . .	<i>You Never Can Tell</i>

BYRNE, CECILY

Started with 'The Pilgrim Players.'

Repertory Theatre, Feb. 1913–June 1915.

Viola . . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Cecily . . . . .	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
Ethel Borridge . . . . .	<i>The Cassilis Engagement</i>
Sylvette . . . . .	<i>The Fantasticks</i>
Kate . . . . .	<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>
Lady Teazle . . . . .	<i>The School for Scandal</i>

BYRNE, J. ADRIAN (Aug. 1918–Mar. 1919).

Lucentio . . . . .	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
Thompson . . . . .	<i>Milestones</i>

## 218 BIRMINGHAM REPERTORY THEATRE

BYRNE, J. ADRIAN—*continued.*

Rorlund . . . . .	<i>Pillars of Society</i>
General Mead . . . .	<i>Abraham Lincoln</i>
Ainnle . . . . .	<i>Deirdre of the Sorrows</i>
Fabian . . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>

CHATWIN, MARGARET.

Started with 'The Pilgrim Players.'

Repertory Theatre, Feb. 1913 to present.

Mrs. Cassilis . . . .	<i>The Cassilis Engagement</i>
Nan . . . . .	<i>The Tragedy of Nan</i>
Candida . . . . .	<i>Candida</i>
Lady Macbeth . . . .	<i>Macbeth</i>
Medea . . . . .	<i>Medea</i>
Katharine . . . . .	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>

CLAREMONT, ARTHUR (Aug. 1918–July 1920).

Andrew Aguecheek . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Sir Peter Teazle . . .	<i>The School for Scandal</i>
Major Warrington . .	<i>The Cassilis Engagement</i>
Lord Rufford . . . .	<i>A Woman of No Importance</i>
Hilary Cutts . . . . .	<i>The New Sin</i>
Dogberry . . . . .	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>

CLARKE-SMITH, DOUGLAS (Feb.–Aug. 1919).

Young Marlow . . . .	<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>
John Worthing . . . .	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
Malvolio . . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Benedick . . . . .	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>
Joseph Surface . . . .	<i>The School for Scandal</i>
Hotspur . . . . .	<i>Henry IV., Part I.</i>

CLEWLOW, FRANK.

Stage Manager, Aug. 1913–June 1918.

Productions include :—

*Cupid and the Styx*

CLEWLOW, FRANK—*continued.*

*Just to Get Married*  
*Lady Windermere's Fan*  
*The Critic*  
*The Mock Doctor*

COOPER, G. MELVILLE (Aug.—Nov. 1914 and Aug. 1919  
to present).

Isaac Mendoza . . . . *The Duenna*  
Mangan . . . . *Heartbreak House*  
The Earl of Loam . . . *The Admirable Crichton*  
Bob Acres . . . . *The Rivals*  
General Bridgenorth . . *Getting Married*  
Samuel Sweetland . . . *The Farmer's Wife*

CORFIELD, JOYCE (Jan.—July 1923).

Jane . . . . . *The Romantic Age*  
Stella . . . . . *The Return of the Prodigal*  
Cecily . . . . . *The Importance of Being Earnest*  
April . . . . . *Advertising April*

CRANMER, ARTHUR.

Don Alphonso . . . . *Così fan tutte* (1920, '21, '22)  
Dalua . . . . . *The Immortal Hour* (1921, '22,  
'23, '24)  
Don Pasquale . . . . *Don Pasquale* (1921)  
Don Giovanni . . . . *Don Giovanni* (1922)

CRESWELL, PETER (Nov. and Dec. 1922).

Master Hammon . . . *The Shoemaker's Holiday*  
Faulkland . . . . . *The Rivals*

CROMBIE, OLIVER (Aug.—Dec. 1919).

David Llewellyn Davids *The New Sin*  
Major Petkoff . . . . *Arms and the Man*  
Duke . . . . . *As You Like It*  
Dawes . . . . . *The Man from Blankley's*

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### DAMS, GEOFFREY.

Ferrando . . . .	<i>Così Fan Tutte</i> (1922)
Midir . . . .	<i>The Immortal Hour</i> (1922)
The Lover . . . .	<i>Fête Galante</i> (1923)

### DASH, HILDA BLACKMAR.

Scenic Artist (Jan. 1922 to present).

### DE LACY, LOUISE.

Started with 'The Pilgrim Players.' With Repertory Company at intervals from 1913 to present.

Gwendoline . . . .	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
The Unknown Lady . . . .	<i>The Silver Box</i>
Lady Marchmont . . . .	<i>The Cassilis Engagement</i>
Mrs. Allonby . . . .	<i>A Woman of No Importance</i>
Clarissa . . . .	<i>The Confederacy</i>
Mrs. Bluebin . . . .	<i>Back to Methuselah, Part IV.</i>

### DEXTER, WILLIAM (Nov. 1917–Mar. 1919).

James Telfer . . . .	<i>Trelawny of the Wells</i>
Renard . . . .	<i>The Corsican Brothers</i>
Cedric Haslam . . . .	<i>The Honeymoon</i>
Mr. Hopper . . . .	<i>Lady Windermere's Fan</i>
Antonio . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Christopher Sly . . . .	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>

### DOBLE, FRANCES (Jan. 1923–March 1924).

Lady Mabel . . . .	<i>The Cassilis Engagement</i>
Ecrasia . . . .	<i>Back to Methuselah, Part V.</i>
Dora . . . .	<i>Diplomacy</i>
Patricia Carleon . . . .	<i>Magic</i>

### DODD, JOSEPH A. (Aug. 1914–Feb. 1919).

Sir Toby Belch . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Face . . . .	<i>The Alchemist</i>
Falstaff . . . .	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
Major Petkoff . . . .	<i>Arms and the Man</i>

DODD, JOSEPH A.—*continued.*

Samuel Sweetland . . . *The Farmer's Wife*

Burgess . . . . . *Candida*

DREWITT, STANLEY (Feb. and March 1919). Produced :—

*Strife*

*The Mollusc*

*The Gentlemen of the Press*

*She Stoops to Conquer*

*Everyman*

DRINKWATER, JOHN.

Secretary of 'The Pilgrim Players,' 1907–1912.

General Manager, Repertory Theatre, 1912–July 1919.

Produced the majority of the plays during latter period, including :—

*The Trojan Women*

*Pillars of Society*

*The Alchemist*

*The Faithful*

*The Tempest*

*Arms and the Man*

DRINKWATER, A. E.

London Representative (Nov. 1916–Jan. 1923).

Arranged and superintended London performances and tours. Produced :—

*The Farmer's Wife*

*Partnership*

*St. George and the Dragons*

DUDLEY, MARGARET (Feb. 1913–June 1914).

Lady Mabel . . . . . *The Cassilis Engagement*

Jenny . . . . . *The Tragedy of Nan*

Mercy . . . . . *David Ballard*

Dolly . . . . . *You Never Can Tell*

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DUNN-YARKER, JOHN (Feb. 1913–June 1915).

Fenton . . . . .	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
Silvius . . . . .	<i>As You Like It</i>
Jan . . . . .	<i>Miles Dixon</i>
Allworth . . . . .	<i>A New Way to Pay Old Debts</i>
Ferdinand . . . . .	<i>The Tempest</i>
Tissot . . . . .	<i>His Majesty's Pleasure</i>

EDMONDS, FRANK (Sept. 1914 to present).

Musician

Musical antiquary

Keeper of Music Library

EDWARDS, H. V.

Assistant Stage Manager (Feb.–Dec. 1918).

EVENNETT, WALLACE (Jan. 1922 to present).

Wister . . . . .	<i>The New Morality</i>
Andrew Aguecheek . . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Ernest . . . . .	<i>The Admirable Crichton</i>
Mazzini Dunn . . . . .	<i>Heartbreak House</i>
Franklyn Barnabas . . . . .	<i>Back to Methuselah, Part II.</i>
Cloten . . . . .	<i>Cymbeline</i>

FABER, FAITH (Aug.–Dec. 1920).

Laila . . . . .	<i>The Potter's Shop</i>
Flippanta . . . . .	<i>The Confederacy</i>
Raina . . . . .	<i>Arms and the Man</i>
Ann Sinclair . . . . .	<i>Don</i>

FAY, FRANK J. (Dec. 1918 and Dec. 1919–March 1920).

Baptista . . . . .	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
Old King Cole . . . . .	<i>The Christmas Party</i>
Crabtree . . . . .	<i>The School for Scandal</i>

FAY, FRANK J.—*continued.*

Major Petkoff . . .	<i>Arms and the Man</i>
Dr. Glaisher . . .	<i>The Return of the Prodigal</i>
Master Laurentius . .	<i>The Witch</i>

FRANGÇON-DAVIES, GWEN (July 1921 to present).

Etain . . . . .	<i>The Immortal Hour</i>
Betty . . . . .	<i>The New Morality</i>
Miss Phoebe . . . .	<i>Quality Street</i>
Queen Mary . . . .	<i>Mary Stuart</i>
Eve . . . . .	<i>Back to Methuselah, Part I.</i>
Juliet . . . . .	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>

FILMER, A. E.

Stage Director (June 1918—Jan. 1924).

Productions include :—

*The Witch*  
*The Romantic Young Lady*  
*The Confederacy*  
*Getting Married*  
*Othello*  
*The Shoemaker's Holiday*

FIRTH, IVAN.

Assistant Stage Manager (Feb.—June 1913).

FISHER, ANN.

Head Dressmaker (Feb. 1913 to present).

FLETCHER, WILFRED (April—June 1919).

Orsino . . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Claudio . . . . .	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>
Bassanio . . . . .	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
Charles Surface . . .	<i>The School for Scandal</i>

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FLINT, THOMAS FODEN.

Started with 'The Pilgrim Players.'

Stage Manager (Feb.—June 1913).

Actor (June 1913—Sept. 1914).

Peter Stockmann . . . *An Enemy of the People*

Messenger . . . . *Rebellion*

Glendower . . . . *Henry IV., Part I.*

Whiskerandos . . . *The Critic*

Diggory . . . . . *She Stoops to Conquer*

FRENCH, HAROLD (Feb.—July 1917).

Gerald . . . . . *Thompson*

Percinet . . . . . *The Fantasticks*

Fenton . . . . . *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Webber . . . . . *Partnership*

GATTY, REGINALD (Aug. 1918—July 1923).

Gremio . . . . . *The Taming of the Shrew*

Holofernes . . . . *Love's Labour's Lost*

George Dandin . . . *George Dandin*

Assisted in productions of *The Immortal Hour, Il Matrimonio Segreto* and *Don Pasquale*.

Principal of School of Opera (April 1922—July 1923).

GILL, MAUD (Aug. 1913 to present).

Dolly . . . . . *You Never Can Tell*

Jenny. . . . . *The Tragedy of Nan*

Rose Sibley . . . . *Milestones*

Gwendoline . . . . *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Tweenie . . . . . *The Admirable Crichton*

Thirza Tapper . . . *The Farmer's Wife*

Stage Manager (Aug. 1920—Feb. 1924).

GOODEY, TOM.

Midir . . . . . *The Immortal Hour* (1921)

## GRAHAM, CLAUDE.

Started with 'The Pilgrim Players.' Played occasionally at theatre up to Aug. 1914.

Timson . . . . .	<i>The Pigeon</i>
Major Warrington . . . . .	<i>The Cassilis Engagement</i>
King John . . . . .	<i>King John</i>
M'Comus . . . . .	<i>You Never Can Tell</i>
Booth Voysey . . . . .	<i>The Voysey Inheritance</i>

## GREEN, DOROTHY (Feb. 1916 and Oct. 1917-Jan. 1918).

Chenda . . . . .	<i>The Fountain</i>
The Beggar Maid . . . . .	<i>Cophetua</i>
Rose Trelawny . . . . .	<i>Trelawny of the Wells</i>
Rosalind . . . . .	<i>As You Like It</i>

## HAINES, W. RIBTON (Feb. 1913-Nov. 1915).

Sir Toby Belch . . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Pargetter . . . . .	<i>The Tragedy of Nan</i>
Dangle . . . . .	<i>The Critic</i>
The Porter . . . . .	<i>Cupid and the Styx</i>
Santa Claus . . . . .	<i>The Christmas Party</i>
Sir Lucius O'Trigger . . . . .	<i>The Rivals</i>

## HARDWICKE, CEDRIC (Jan. 1922 to present).

Darnley . . . . .	<i>Mary Stuart</i>
Captain Shotover . . . . .	<i>Heartbreak House</i>
Iachimo . . . . .	<i>Cymbeline</i>
He-Ancient . . . . .	<i>Back to Methuselah, Part V.</i>
The Billionaire's Son . . . . .	<i>Gas</i>
Churdles Ash . . . . .	<i>The Farmer's Wife</i>

## HOPE, EVELYN (Feb.-May 1923, and Sept. 1923 to present).

Lady Utterword . . . . .	<i>Heartbreak House</i>
Abishag of Shunem . . . . .	<i>The Language of the Birds</i>
Queen . . . . .	<i>Cymbeline</i>

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HOPE, EVELYN—*continued*.

Cleopatra-Semiramis . . . *Back to Methuselah, Part V.*  
Araminta Dench . . . *The Farmer's Wife*

HORDERN, CHARLES (Feb. 1923—Mar. 1924).

Don Antonio . . . *The Duenna*  
Thomas Randolph . . . *Mary Stuart*  
General Lee . . . *Abraham Lincoln*  
Philario . . . *Cymbeline*  
The Duke . . . *Magic*

HOUSLEY, MARIE (Feb.—June 1922, and Oct. 1922).

Countess of Brockle-  
hurst . . . *The Admirable Crichton*  
Mrs. Alving . . . *Ghosts*  
Ann Redvers . . . *The Secret Woman*  
Lady Capulet . . . *Romeo and Juliet*

IRVING, ELSIE (Dec. 1922—July 1923).

Countess of Brockle-  
hurst . . . *The Admirable Crichton*  
Princess . . . *Advertising April*  
Lady Farringford . . . *The Return of the Prodigal*  
Lady Bracknell . . . *The Importance of Being Earnest*

JACKSON, BARRY V.

Founded 'The Pilgrim Players,' 1907.

Founded Birmingham Repertory Theatre, of which  
he is Director, 1913.

Productions include :—

*The Glandestine Marriage*  
*The Would-be Gentleman*  
*Love's Labour's Lost*  
*Twelfth Night*  
*The Duenna*

JACKSON, BARRY V.—*continued.*

*The School for Scandal*

*Various children's plays, and operas.*

Designed scenery and costumes for most Shakespeare and eighteenth-century plays, and others.

Author of *The Christmas Party*.

JENOURE, AIDA (Nov. 1921—Jan. 1922).

Madame Raquin . . . *Thérèse Raquin*

Mrs. Bridgenorth . . . *Getting Married*

Doña Barbarita . . . *The Romantic Young Lady*

The Baroness . . . *The King of the Peacocks*

JOHNSTON, JEAN.

Box Office Assistant (March 1916).

Chief Box Office Clerk (Aug. 1920).

JOHNSTON, OLIVER (May—Oct. 1917 and June 1919—Jan. 1922).

Philip . . . . . *You Never Can Tell*

Richard Coaker . . . *The Farmer's Wife*

Lewis Price . . . . . *Change*

Cassio . . . . . *Othello*

Stephen Bonnington . . *Don*

Valentine Brown . . . *Quality Street*

JOHNSTONE-DOUGLAS, W.

Eochaidh . . . . . *The Immortal Hour* (1922)

KEITH-JOHNSTON, COLIN (Aug. 1921 to present).

Eugene Marchbanks . . *Candida*

Oswald Alving . . . *Ghosts*

Geoffrey Cassilis . . . *The Cassilis Engagement*

John Rhead . . . . . *Milestones*

Adam . . . . . *Back to Methuselah, Part I.*

George Smerdon . . . *The Farmer's Wife*

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KENDAL, MAY (Sept. 1920-June 1922).

Anne Page . . . .	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
Cecily . . . .	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
Rosario . . . .	<i>The Romantic Young Lady</i>
Ann Sinclair . . . .	<i>Don</i>
Ethel Borridge . . . .	<i>The Cassilis Engagement</i>
Lucile . . . .	<i>The Would-be Gentleman</i>

KING, DENNIS (Feb. 1913-Aug. 1914, and Oct. 1915-Dec. 1916).

Dennis . . . .	<i>As You Like It</i>
Rugby . . . .	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
Livens . . . .	<i>The Silver Box</i>
Roger . . . .	<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>
Dandy Imp . . . .	<i>The First Distiller</i>

LEON, SYDNEY (Sept. 1918-June 1920).

Olaf . . . .	<i>Pillars of Society</i>
Alice . . . .	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>
Luce . . . .	<i>The Knight of the Burning Pestle</i>
Bianca . . . .	<i>Othello</i>
Moth. . . .	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>
Unity Copplestone . . . .	<i>St. George and the Dragons</i>

LONGDEN, JOHN (Feb.-May 1923).

Rev. Septimus Tudor	<i>The Farmer's Wife</i>
Edwin Stanton . . . .	<i>Abraham Lincoln</i>
Aviragus . . . .	<i>Cymbeline</i>

LUCAS, LEIGHTON (Aug. 1922-July 1923).

Pierrot . . . .	<i>The Pierrot of the Minute</i>
Pierrot . . . .	<i>L'Enfant Prodigue</i>
The Chimney Sweep	<i>The Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweep</i>

Arranged and directed the three above-named performances, and conducted *The Duenna*.

MARQUAND, CLIFFORD (Jan.—July 1923).

- Sir John Faringford . . . *The Return of the Prodigal*  
 John Worthing . . . *The Importance of Being Earnest*  
 Edmund Hobart . . . *Advertising April*  
 Henry Knowle . . . *The Romantic Age*

MASON, LILIAN (Jan.—July 1923).

- Mrs. Jackson . . . *The Return of the Prodigal*  
 Miss Prism . . . *The Importance of Being Earnest*  
 Mrs. Knowle . . . *The Romantic Age*

MASSINGHAM, DOROTHY (Sept. 1917—June 1919).

- Lady Windermere . . . *Lady Windermere's Fan*  
 Flora Lloyd . . . *The Honeymoon*  
 Viola . . . *Twelfth Night*  
 Hero . . . *Much Ado About Nothing*  
 Gwendoline . . . *The Importance of Being Earnest*  
 Everyman . . . *Everyman*

MATTHEWS, APPLEBY.

Musical Director for :—

- The Immortal Hour*  
*Il Matrimonio Segreto*  
*Don Pasquale*  
*Così Fan Tutte*  
*Don Giovanni*  
*Fête Galante*  
*The Boatswain's Mate*

MATTHEWS, BACHE.

- Started with 'The Pilgrim Players,' 1907.  
 Treasurer for 'The Pilgrim Players,' 1911.  
 Business Manager, Repertory Theatre, 1912.  
 General Manager, Sept. 1922.  
 Assistant Director, Sept. 1923.

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MAUND, MIELLE (Feb.—July 1916).

Viola . . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Raina . . . . .	<i>Arms and the Man</i>
Isobel . . . . .	<i>When the Devil was Ill</i>
Margery . . . . .	<i>The Charity that Began at Home</i>
Fleance . . . . .	<i>Macbeth</i>
Miss Angela Deakin . . . . .	<i>Her Proper Pride</i>

MERRALL, MARY (June 1915—Jan. 1916).

Ethel Borridge . . . . .	<i>The Cassilis Engagement</i>
Lydia Languish . . . . .	<i>The Rivals</i>
Gormflaith . . . . .	<i>King Lear's Wife</i>
A Poor Girl . . . . .	<i>The Faithful</i>
Miss Grantham . . . . .	<i>The Lyar</i>
Miss Sterling . . . . .	<i>The Clandestine Marriage</i>

MERRITT, GEORGE (Jan.—June 1922).

Manders . . . . .	<i>Ghosts</i>
Rev. James Mavor	
Morell . . . . .	<i>Candida</i>
Sir Lucius O'Trigger . . . . .	<i>The Rivals</i>
Geoffrey Belasis . . . . .	<i>The New Morality</i>
Sir Francis Acton . . . . .	<i>A Woman Killed with Kindness</i>
Escalus . . . . .	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>

MESSITER, ERIC (Feb. 1919 to present).

Stage Manager (Feb. 1919—June 1920).

Father Anthony . . . . .	<i>Getting Married</i>
Armado . . . . .	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>
Baron Stein . . . . .	<i>Diplomacy</i>
Gentleman Susan . . . . .	<i>The Romantic Age</i>
Chinese Conjuror . . . . .	<i>The Christmas Party</i>
Judge Brach . . . . .	<i>Hedda Gabler</i>

MILLS, HAROLD (Sept. 1914 to present).

Conductor of Orchestra.

## MOORE, FRANK.

Started with 'The Pilgrim Players.'

Played occasionally at theatre, 1913-1917.

Member of company, Aug. 1917-July 1918, March 1919-June 1921, and April 1923 to present.

Dr. Stockmann . . .	<i>An Enemy of the People</i>
Overreach . . .	<i>A New Way to Pay Old Debts</i>
Captain Brassbound . .	<i>Captain Brassbound's Conversion</i>
Iago . . . . .	<i>Othello</i>
Absolon . . . . .	<i>The Witch</i>
King Henry . . . .	<i>Henry IV., Parts I. and II.</i>

## MORROW, CHRISTIAN (Sept. 1918-June 1920).

Lister . . . . .	<i>Miss Robinson</i>
Feste . . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Hortensio . . . . .	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
Tony Lumpkin . . . .	<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>
Lancelot Gobbo . . . .	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
Crabtree . . . . .	<i>The School for Scandal</i>

## NEVILLE, MAURICE (Dec. 1917-April 1918).

Charles Haslam . . . .	<i>The Honeymoon</i>
Captain de Feenix . . .	<i>Trelawny of the Wells</i>
Bassett . . . . .	<i>St. George and the Dragons</i>
Carle . . . . .	<i>The Rogueries of Scapin</i>

## NEWTON, ROBERT.

Assistant Stage Manager (Aug. 1921-July 1923).

Fabian . . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
The Father . . . . .	<i>The Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweep</i>
Jesse Redvers . . . .	<i>The Secret Woman</i>
Balthasar . . . . .	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>

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NORTH, GROSVENOR (March 1921–June 1923).

Hotspur . . . .	<i>Henry IV., Part I.</i>
Eilert Lovborg . . .	<i>Hedda Gabler</i>
Dorante . . . .	<i>The Would-be Gentleman</i>
Crichton . . . .	<i>The Admirable Crichton</i>
Mervyn Jones . . .	<i>Advertising April</i>
Gervase Mallory . .	<i>The Romantic Age</i>

ORFORD, CATHLEEN.

Started with 'The Pilgrim Players.'

At theatre, Feb. 1913–March 1919.

Maria . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Mrs. Jones . . .	<i>The Silver Box</i>
Annie Roberts . . .	<i>Strife</i>
Thirza Tapper . . .	<i>The Farmer's Wife</i>
Gwen Price . . .	<i>Change</i>
Susan . . . .	<i>Abraham Lincoln</i>

PAIN, ELSIE (Jan.–July 1923).

Florence Carter . . .	<i>High Tea</i>
Mother . . . .	<i>Everybody's Husband</i>
Alice . . . .	<i>The Romantic Age</i>

PHILLIPS, CYRIL.

Assistant Manager, March 1921.

Acting Manager (on tour), Jan. 1922.

Business Manager, Sept. 1922.

General Manager, Sept. 1923.

PICKARD, HELENA (Dec. 1915–July 1917).

Robin . . . .	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
Ellen . . . .	<i>The Tragedy of Nan</i>
Sophy Smerdon . . .	<i>The Farmer's Wife</i>
Jenny . . . .	<i>The Fountain</i>

PIENNE, YVETTE (Dec. 1922 to present).

Lady Mary Lazenby	<i>The Admirable Crichton</i>
Melisande . . . .	<i>The Romantic Age</i>
Violet . . . . .	<i>The Return of the Prodigal</i>
Gwendoline . . . .	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
Chloe . . . . .	<i>Back to Methuselah, Part V.</i>

PINCHARD, REV. ARNOLD.

Assisted 'The Pilgrim Players.'

Produced the following plays at the theatre :—

*The Fantasticks* (1913).

*Henry IV., Part I.* (1913)

*Everyman* (1913)

*The Interlude of Youth* (1913)

*Chester Nativity Plays* (1913)

PINCHARD, BETTY.

Started with 'The Pilgrim Players.'

At theatre, Feb. 1913—Jan. 1917.

Fioretta . . . . .	<i>Ser Taldo's Bride</i>
Phoebe . . . . .	<i>As You Like It</i>
Louisa . . . . .	<i>David Ballard</i>
Hedvig . . . . .	<i>The Wild Duck</i>
Flo . . . . .	<i>Over a Garden Wall</i>
Columbine . . . . .	<i>A Merry Death</i>
Sibley Sweetland . . .	<i>The Farmer's Wife</i>

PINCHARD, LESTER.

Composed music for *The Christmas Party* and assisted musically in various 'Pilgrim' and theatre productions.

RABY, MARY (Aug. 1913—June 1921).

Mrs. Clandon . . .	<i>You Never Can Tell</i>
Lady Denison . . .	<i>The Charity that Began at Home</i>

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RABY, MARY—*continued.*

Catherine . . . .	<i>Arms and the Man</i>
Araminta Dench . .	<i>The Farmer's Wife</i>
Mrs. Lincoln . . .	<i>Abraham Lincoln</i>
Hecuba . . . . .	<i>The Trojan Women</i>

REA, WILLIAM J. (Dec. 1915–Mar. 1919).

Nicola . . . . .	<i>Arms and the Man</i>
Churdles Ash . . .	<i>The Farmer's Wife</i>
Gaffer Pearce . . .	<i>The Tragedy of Nan</i>
Lord Windermere . .	<i>Lady Windermere's Fan</i>
Petruchio . . . . .	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
Abraham Lincoln . .	<i>Abraham Lincoln</i>

RELPH, PHYLLIS (April–June 1916 and Oct. 1922).

Mistress Ford . . .	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
Portia . . . . .	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>
Rosalind . . . . .	<i>As You Like It</i>
Gloria . . . . .	<i>You Never Can Tell</i>
Salome . . . . .	<i>The Secret Woman</i>
Lady Mary . . . . .	<i>The Admirable Crichton</i>

RICHMOND, SUSAN (July 1919–June 1920, March and April 1921, and Jan.–June 1922).

Ann Pedersdotter . .	<i>The Witch</i>
Suiva . . . . .	<i>The God of Gods</i>
Candida . . . . .	<i>Candida</i>
Lydia Languish . . .	<i>The Rivals</i>
Mistress Frankford .	<i>A Woman Killed with Kind-</i> <i>ness</i>
Viola . . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>

RIDLEY, ARNOLD (Aug. 1918–June 1920).

Little Aminadab . . .	<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>
Vernal . . . . .	<i>Gentlemen of the Press</i>

RIDLEY, ARNOLD—*continued.*

Valentine . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Snake . . . .	<i>The School for Scandal</i>
Master Jorgen . . .	<i>The Witch</i>
Dull . . . . .	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>

## ROSE, ARTHUR (Feb.—July 1916).

Rawlings . . . .	<i>When the Devil was Ill</i>
Kastril . . . .	<i>The Alchemist</i>
Oliver . . . .	<i>As You Like It</i>
Bohun . . . .	<i>You Never Can Tell</i>

## ROSS, ERIC (Sept.—Nov. 1918).

Adam Lankester . .	<i>Just to Get Married</i>
Owen . . . .	<i>Deirdre of the Sorrows</i>
Eugene Marchbanks .	<i>Candida</i>

## SAFFERY, GERALD.

Stage Manager (Aug. 1920—Feb. 1923).

## SELWYN, ARCHIE (March—May 1921).

Jens Schelotrup . .	<i>The Witch</i>
Grivet . . . .	<i>Thérèse Raquin</i>
Gadshill . . . .	<i>Henry IV., Part I.</i>
Travers . . . .	<i>Henry IV., Part II.</i>

## SHAMMON, NOEL (Feb. 1913—March 1919).

Archie Surrage . .	<i>The Education of Mr. Surrage</i>
George Smerdon . .	<i>The Farmer's Wife</i>
Slender . . . .	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
Gwilym Price . .	<i>Change</i>
Cokane . . . .	<i>Widowers' Houses</i>
William Seward . .	<i>Abraham Lincoln</i>

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SHAND, PHYLLIS (Sept. 1919 to present).

Laura . . . .	<i>The Newly Married Couple</i>
Cerrina . . . .	<i>The Confederacy</i>
Donna Clara . . . .	<i>The Duenna</i>
Lady Catherine . . . .	<i>The Admirable Crichton</i>
Susan . . . .	<i>A Woman Killed with Kindness</i>
Sibley Sweetland . . . .	<i>The Farmer's Wife</i>

SHELVING, PAUL.

Designer (Jan. 1920 to present).

Designed scenery and costumes for many plays,  
including :—

*Back to Methuselah*  
*The Immortal Hour*  
*The Language of the Birds*  
*L'Enfant Prodigue*  
*The Would-be Gentleman*  
*The Witch*

SIMMONDS, HERBERT.

Gratiano . . . .	<i>Così fan Tutte</i> (1920)
Eochaidh . . . .	<i>The Immortal Hour</i> (1921)
Leporello . . . .	<i>Don Giovanni</i> (1922)

SMYTHE, PAUL (Nov. 1915–March 1916 and Feb. 1920 to present).

George Tesman . . . .	<i>Hedda Gabler</i>
Camille . . . .	<i>Thérèse Raquin</i>
Alderman Collins . . . .	<i>Getting Married</i>
The King . . . .	<i>The Shoemaker's Holiday</i>
Billy Dunn . . . .	<i>Heartbreak House</i>
Valiant Dunnybrig . . . .	<i>The Farmer's Wife</i>

SNELL, FRANK (Aug. 1920–June 1921).

Airrag Assar . . . .	<i>The Potter's Shop</i>
Moneytrap . . . .	<i>The Confederacy</i>

SNELL, FRANK—*continued.*

Gadshill . . . .	<i>Henry IV., Part I.</i>
Bardolph . . . .	<i>Henry IV., Part I.</i>
Simple . . . .	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>

## STATHAM, ARTHUR (Jan.—July 1923).

Ern . . . .	<i>The Romantic Age</i>
Dr. Glaishier . .	<i>The Return of the Prodigal</i>
Merriman . . . .	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
Henry Brown . .	<i>High Tea</i>

## SUNDERLAND, SCOTT.

Started with 'The Pilgrim Players.' At theatre,  
Feb. 1913—Sept. 1914, Mar.—July 1916, Jan.—June  
1922, and Feb. 1923 to present.

Youth . . . .	<i>The Interlude of Youth</i>
Feste . . . .	<i>Twelfth Night</i>
Bothwell . . . .	<i>Mary Stuart</i>
Captain Absolute .	<i>The Rivals</i>
Master Frankford .	<i>A Woman Killed with Kindness</i>
The Elderly Gentleman	<i>Back to Methuselah, Part IV.</i>

## SWINLEY, ION (Dec. 1914—Jan. 1916 and April—June 1922).

Tony Lumpkin . .	<i>She Stoops to Conquer</i>
Caliban . . . .	<i>The Tempest</i>
Lear . . . .	<i>King Lear's Wife</i>
Henri Quatre . .	<i>His Majesty's Pleasure</i>
Kurano . . . .	<i>The Faithful</i>
Romeo . . . .	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>

## TANDY, VICTOR (Oct. 1918—March 1919).

Morell . . . .	<i>Candida</i>
Tranio . . . .	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>
Messenger . . . .	<i>Abraham Lincoln</i>
King of Hearts . .	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>

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TAYLOR, DOROTHY (Sept. 1916—Jan. 1923).

Eva Somerset . . .	<i>St. George and the Dragons</i>
Mrs. Elvested . . .	<i>Hedda Gabler</i>
Lesbia Grantham . .	<i>Getting Married</i>
Mrs. Lemmy . . .	<i>The Foundations</i>
Mathilde . . . . .	<i>The Cleansing Stain</i>
Elizabeth Thompsett	<i>Don</i>

THOMAS, S. ROCHELLE.

Started with 'The Pilgrim Players.' Controller of theatre wardrobe, Feb. 1913 to June, 1915.

Miss Prism . . . .	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
The Nurse . . . .	<i>The Christmas Party</i>
Mrs. Pratt . . . .	<i>The Return of the Prodigal</i>
Mrs. Bartleet . . .	<i>Their Point of View</i>

THORNTON, ISABEL.

Started with 'The Pilgrim Players' and played on many occasions at the theatre.

Mrs. Borridge . . .	<i>The Cassilis Engagement</i>
Mrs. Goliath Blow .	<i>Abraham Lincoln</i>
Catherine Petkoff .	<i>Arms and the Man</i>
Nurse . . . . .	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
María Pepa . . . .	<i>The Romantic Young Lady</i>
Mary Hearn . . . .	<i>The Farmer's Wife</i>

TITTERTON, FRANK.

Started with 'The Pilgrim Players.'

Amiens . . . . .	<i>As You Like It</i> (Feb. 1914)
Ernesto . . . . .	<i>Don Pasquale</i> (July 1921)

VINDEN, E. STUART (Feb. 1913—July 1916, and Feb. 1919—July 1921).

Eugene Marchbanks .	<i>Candida</i>
Captain Bluntschli .	<i>Arms and the Man</i>

VINDEN, E. STUART—*continued*

Othello . . . . .	<i>Othello</i>
Biron . . . . .	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>
Martin . . . . .	<i>The Witch</i>
Henry, Prince of Wales	<i>Henry IV., Parts I. and II.</i>

## WATTS-TYE, ERNEST (Dec. 1917–May 1918).

Parker . . . . .	<i>Lady Windermere's Fan</i>
Noah . . . . .	<i>The Christmas Party</i>
Leandre . . . . .	<i>The Rogueries of Scapin</i>
Webber . . . . .	<i>Partnership</i>
Rev. Cecil M'Kinley	<i>St. George and the Dragons</i>

## WAYNE, RICHARD.

Assistant Stage Manager, April 1916–Jan. 1918.

Simple . . . . .	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
Hatton . . . . .	<i>The Critic</i>
Dai Matthews . . . .	<i>Change</i>
Gaston . . . . .	<i>The Honeymoon</i>

## WILLSON, OSMUND (Feb. 1920 to present).

Falstaff . . . . .	<i>Henry IV., Parts I. and II. and</i> <i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>
Jourdain . . . . .	<i>The Would-be Gentleman</i>
Bishop of Chelsea . .	<i>Getting Married</i>
Bobby . . . . .	<i>The Romantic Age</i>
Lubin . . . . .	<i>Back to Methuselah, Part II.</i>



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